ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEW

with

ROBERT G. STANTON

Director | National Park Service | 1997-2001

PART ONE

April 2, 2004 | Fairfax Station, Virginia

PART TWO

June 4, 2004 | Fairfax Station, Virginia

PART THREE

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Conducted By

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Director Stanton escorts Mrs. Clinton on a Save America's Treasures program visit to Mesa Verde.

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Robert G. Stanton (back row) and the other participants at the Federal Executive Institute.

PREFACE

This oral history with Robert G. Stanton is the second in a series of interviews with prominent former National Park Service leaders. Three interview sessions were recorded over a period of months at Mr. Stanton's home in Fairfax Station, Virginia, outside Washington, D.C. Few Park Service directors have had the breadth and length of service of Mr. Stanton. During his nearly forty-year career with the National Park Service, Mr. Stanton served as a seasonal park ranger, management assistant, park superintendent, deputy regional director, associate director, regional director, and director. Mr. Stanton's experience of Park Service organization and operations at the park, regional, and national level has given him a unique perspective. This interview attempts not only to chronicle the various aspects of Mr. Stanton's distinguished career but also to capture some of the valuable insights that he gained.

The interview reveals to some extent the way in which Mr. Stanton's modest upbringing and experiences early in life helped shape both his character and career. His early experiences combating segregated education in Texas shaped his character and his priorities later as director. During his tenure, he became keenly interested in promoting greater diversity within the National Park System and promoting opportunities for young people. The oral history reveals Mr. Stanton's warm, engaging personality as well as his life-long passion for the national parks and his devotion to the National Park Service.

Mr. Stanton has been very gracious in his support for this project. Not only did he take the time from a demanding schedule for three lengthy interview sessions, he also devoted considerable time and effort to editing the transcript. Both he and I have occasionally inserted brief text to clarify or expand on the material provided. Getting to know Mr. Stanton and the rich legacy of his career during the course of this project has been both an honor and a pleasure.

I would also like to thank Mary Ann Greenwood who diligently transcribed the original interview tapes, to Lise Sajewski who performed the final edit, and to Kerry Skarda of [B] Creative Group, Inc. who designed and produced this publication.

Janet A. McDonnell
National Park Service

“...when people have an understanding and appreciation of the parks, they will want to join in the army of stewards to care for these resources just by their own personal conduct at home, in the communities, and in the parks... that’s going to be the ultimate savior of the national parks—citizens’ caring.”

ABOUT THE INTERVIEWEE

Robert G. Stanton was sworn in as National Park Service's 15th director on August 4, 1997, the first African American director and the first director to go through the Senate confirmation process. Mr. Stanton grew up in Mosier Valley, outside Fort Worth, and earned a bachelor of science degree from Huston-Tillotson in 1963, the first in his immediate family to graduate from college. Later he completed graduate work at Boston University.

Robert Stanton's career with the National Park Service began in 1962 when the secretary of the Interior appointed him as a summer seasonal park ranger at Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming. In 1966 he took a full time position as a personnel management and public information specialist in National Park Service headquarters in Washington, D.C. Three years later, he moved to National Capital Parks-Central as a management assistant, and in 1970 he became superintendent of National Capital Parks-East. The following year, he accepted an appointment as superintendent of Virgin Islands National Park, St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands. In 1974 he became deputy regional director of Southeast Region in Atlanta, Georgia. He returned to Washington in 1976 as assistant director for park operations. Stanton became deputy regional director for the National Capital Region, where he served for eight years. After a year as associate director for operations in Park Service headquarters, he returned to the National Capital Region to become regional director where he served until his retirement in January 1997. His retirement was short-lived. The secretary of the Interior called him back to serve as director. He remained in that position until 2001.

During his distinguished career, Mr. Stanton received three honorary doctorate degrees and numerous awards, including the department of the Interior's highest award, the Distinguished Service Award. He remains actively involved in professional and civic affairs, teaching and serving in leadership capacity of the Student Conservation Association, Inc., National Audubon Society, Guest Services, Inc., the African American Experience Fund of the National Park Foundation, and others. Though retired from the Park Service he continues to promote his life-long interest in national parks and advancing opportunities for young people.

PART

ONE

APRIL 2, 2004
FAIRFAX STATION, VIRGINIA

THE EARLY YEARS

You were talking about growing up.

...In Mosier Valley, which is in the northeast corner of Tarrant County, [Texas], and it was incorporated in the Fort Worth city limits in the mid-1960s.[1] Mosier Valley is a small, close-knit, African American community primarily. It's integrated now, but it was founded shortly after the Civil War by African Americans who had worked on plantations in the Tarrant County area.

I attended public school in Mosier Valley, from the first to eighth grade, and then was transported on a daily basis to public schools in Fort Worth from my ninth to the twelfth grade, and this was in the late '50s and I graduated from I.M. Terrell High School in Fort Worth in 1959, and all of the public schools in Texas were still segregated at that time.

I understand that your parents were involved with some other parents in a lawsuit in federal court?

Yes. As you know this year we as a nation observed the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision of 1954,[2] but I can recall it as if it were yesterday, when there was a major effort by my parents and other parents in Mosier Valley to seek acceptable school conditions for their children. I was in the third grade at that time and the school that I attended was very dilapidated. All of the restroom facilities were outside. We had to rely on a limited supply of coal for heating. All of the books and desks and other supplies were hand-me-downs from the white school. The situation deteriorated, so the parents petitioned the school board to construct a new school and provide improved facilities under the doctrine "separate but equal." The school board opted not to make the improvements. What they opted to do was to transport all of the kids from Mosier Valley, from first grade to the eighth grade, to Fort Worth, which would mean that a first grader would have to experience a 30-mile round-trip each day. So the parents said, "We will not accept this." And this was in 1950.

And the parents, of course, risked a lot because some of them were employed by the members of the all-white school board, or in another capacity either as farmers or restaurant workers. They really took a risk, but it was for the love of the children that they sought this. And they petitioned the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] to provide some legal counsel. And two attorneys by the name of C.B. Bunkley and U. Simpson Tate argued successfully in the federal court. And the court ruled that the school district under the "separate but equal" [doctrine] had to construct a new school in Mosier Valley. So my last two grade school years, seventh and eighth grade there in Mosier Valley, were in a new brick school, still segregated obviously, but a new brick school with inside

plumbing. But I still was required to go to I.M. Terrell High School, and we had to travel 30 miles each day, passing up numerous high schools, as required under the Texas policy of segregation in public schools at that time.

I'd be really interested in knowing what a second or third grader thinks about all of that. Do you recall? You would have been old enough to know that this suit was underway and what the issue was.

Yes. The federal court hearing took place over a period of a year. And because of the condition of the school and the refusal of the all-white school board to construct a new facility or substantially upgrade the existing facility, the parents placed their kids in a temporary school situation in a Baptist church and hired two teachers to teach us while the court proceeding was underway. And to the extent that the parents could get off from work and take their kids out of the classes, we actually went to the court to hear, to witness the actual proceedings. It had a tremendous impact on me.

Also in 1950 there was an effort by the parents to integrate one of the elementary schools in Euless, Texas, which was a three-mile drive from Mosier Valley. It would be closer. The parents and the kids and I in the group (I must have been nine or ten years of age) were met with an unruly crowd and that was captured by the news media and what have you. I have copies of the *Fort Worth Telegram* article that covered that incident.[3] But it did reinforce a couple of things: one is that I wanted to continue to pursue my education in spite of those difficulties, but also I really respected the courage of the parents who were willing to risk all for the educational development of their children.

I guess it really started manifesting into a passion that I've had all along that has been reflected in my own activities in the National Park Service. One of the priorities that I have always had as a superintendent, regional director, deputy director, or as the director of the Park Service, was to substantially increase the involvement of young people in the cultural, educational, and natural resource programs of the National Park Service to further their development as responsible citizens.

Now you mentioned that you were the youngest of four children.

Yes, right.

And that you spent some time hauling hay.

Yes, my oldest sister, Ora Lee Shelton, was followed by a brother, Franklin Taylor Stanton, who was killed at the age of twenty-five in Korea in 1951. And then he was followed by my

sister, Joyce Farrow, who passed in 1989. My father passed in 1959, the year that I enrolled as a freshman in college. And my mother died in 1985. My oldest sister, Ora Lee, had eight kids, seven boys and one girl. And my youngest sister had two children. My wife, Janet, and I have two children, Rhonda and Braniff, and one grandchild, Jordan.

So these are some of the relatives still left down in Mosier Valley?

In the Dallas-Fort Worth area, that's right, with the exception of one nephew and one niece who make their home in California and South Carolina respectively. I've lost two of my nephews. My oldest nephew, he and I grew up pretty much like brothers, and we did a lot of farm work together. Right after high school he entered into the Marines and served 24 years in the Marines, including, I think, two tours of duty in Vietnam. But shortly after he retired, unfortunately, he suffered a very severe stroke and then there was a series of strokes after that and he never did fully recover. He died January of last year. He was buried in a military cemetery in Beaufort, South Carolina.

Losing your father at such a young age must have had a large impact on you, too.

No question about that. We came from very meager economic means, and therefore, it was a tremendous struggle for my mother to provide for my support in college, but she did.

COLLEGE YEARS

You got a bachelor's degree from Huston-Tillotson?

Huston-Tillotson College, right. Just a little bit on Huston-Tillotson College (now Huston-Tillotson University). I don't know how much you know about historically black colleges and universities. Shortly after the Civil War many religious denominations founded schools to support the education of newly freed blacks and their offspring. They founded a number of colleges throughout the South. Fisk University is an example, founded by a religious denomination. Morehouse College. Huston-Tillotson is a merger of two schools: one founded by the Congregationalists, which is now the United Church of Christ, and one which was founded by the Methodists, which is now the United Methodists. They merged in '52 and the two church denominations still support it. There are roughly fifty or sixty historically black colleges and universities that were founded by various church denominations. Some of them [are doing] quite well; some are struggling financially. Most of them have a small enrollment compared to the large universities.

Then you have another category of historically black colleges and universities that are land grant or state supported, which were established under the doctrine of "separate but

equal." The states realized that they had to support, use some of their tax dollars to support higher education for African Americans. They did this under the doctrine of "separate but equal." So in Texas you have two schools that were founded under this doctrine that are still state supported, Texas Southern in Houston and Prairie View in Prairie View. All told there must be probably 120 to 130 state-supported and privately endowed historically black colleges and universities. Some of the more internationally known would be Hampton University and certainly Howard University. And Howard University is named for a general in the Union Army, Gen. O.O. [Oliver Otis] Howard. So it's a rich history.

So, how did you end up at Huston-Tillotson?

Huston-Tillotson recruited at I.M. Terrell High School. And a young lady from Mosier Valley who was attending Huston-Tillotson, Bennie Ruth Smith, had a lot to do with encouraging me.

Your other siblings, were they able to attend college?

No, my brother Frank served in World War II. He must have been 18 or 19. Then with the Korea conflict, he re-enlisted. And my youngest sister, Joyce, finished high school and nursing school in Chicago, so she became a nurse. My oldest sister, Ora Lee, finished high school and married young.

INTRODUCTION TO THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

What was your field of study? I would be interested in hearing you talk about your college experiences a little bit.

Physical science – chemistry and mathematics. I had planned to work in some small industry or teach. I don't know whether you are ready to segue into my first introduction to the Park Service. It happened at Huston-Tillotson. In academic year 1961-1962, President [John F.] Kennedy and Vice President [Lyndon B.] Johnson, who had just come into office in '61, appointed a young congressman from Arizona as the secretary of the Interior, Stewart Udall. Of course, this was during the height of the civil rights movement, the early '60s, so there was a lot of sensitivity obviously by President Kennedy, Vice President Johnson, and his Cabinet with respect to, particularly at that time, African American concerns. Stewart Udall came in and took a look at the face of his workforce and there was a noticeable absence [of African Americans] in the professional and technical areas.

So Secretary Udall went to the bureau heads and raised the question, "How many do you have on your staff?" We were called Negroes at the time. "How many Negroes do you have on your staff?" And he was not satisfied with what he learned. In 1961 the National Park Service had only one African American ranger, Noble Samuel, who was in the Virgin Islands National Park.

So Stewart Udall said, "You know, all of the bureau heads have had opportunities to make some improvements over the past years, and you haven't. So what I will do is pull together in my immediate office a cadre of recruiters to go into places where Interior has never gone before, at least on a large scale, to recruit from the historically black colleges and universities."

A recruiter from the secretary's office came to Huston-Tillotson. His goal at Huston-Tillotson was to recruit a minimum of two from that campus and it was already predetermined that they would go into parks where African Americans had never worked before, particularly as rangers. The two positions that had been designated for prospective candidates from Huston-Tillotson were Grand Teton National Park and Yellowstone National Park. The recruiter in conferring with the president said, "This is a new day. It's a new day. We realize Interior has not recruited among your student body before and we want you, Mr. President, to recommend among your students those who you think will represent the college well and will represent themselves well in a new environment and with an agency that heretofore has not had your students in their workforce or other black students in the workforce." So [the president of the college] Dr. Seabrook, the late Dr. J. J. [John Jarvis] Seabrook, and Dr. John [Quill] King, who was the dean at the time and eventually became the president of the college, recommended two of us for those two slots. And then the recruiter said, "If you have other college students whom you would recommend, we would entertain their applications."

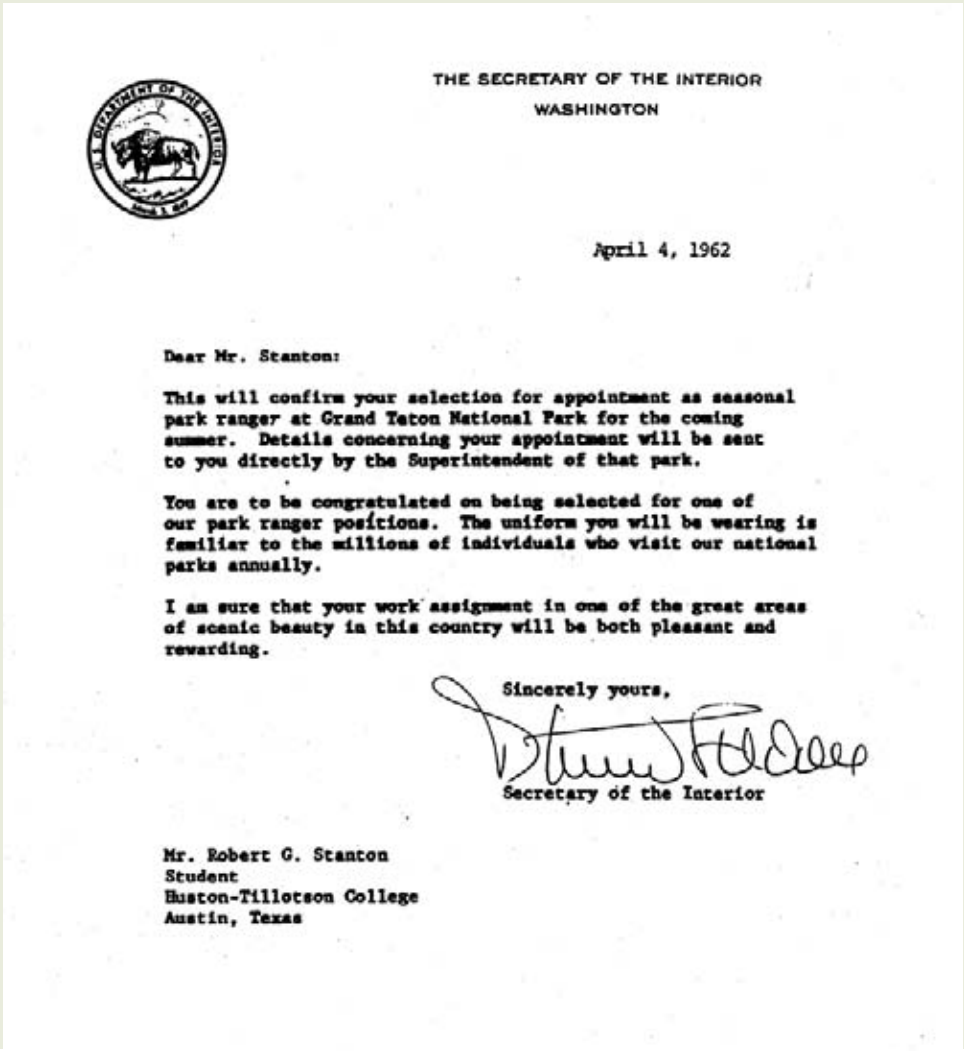
So to make a long story short, my fellow student at Huston-Tillotson, a senior at the time, Preston Shaw, was selected to go to Yellowstone as a ranger. The recruiter also accepted applications from me and from M.B. Micheaux to go to Grand Teton. Curtis Robinson and Willie James went to Rocky Mountain [National Park]. So a total of five of us from Huston-Tillotson College (the other four were seniors and I was a junior) worked as seasonal rangers.

The recruiter also noted to the president, "We are serious about this. Each of those students who accept this opportunity will receive a letter from the secretary himself confirming his appointment for a seasonal ranger position." That kind of appointment was something unheard of even today, that the secretary of the Interior would send a letter to a

college student confirming their appointment. I have the original letter that I received as a student in 1962.

That was quite a commendation, wasn't it, quite an affirmation, for the president to select you and the other students?

Yes. But that was half of the story, because later I conferred with Stewart Udall and he was disappointed in that probably about a third of those who were offered positions nationwide [did not respond]. They [the recruiters] must have gone to about thirty or forty of the historically black colleges selecting students for park positions. And he was disappointed that even after some had accepted the positions, they did not actually show up. I can relate personally to some of the difficulties that the students might have confronted.



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

April 4, 1962

Dear Mr. Stanton:

This will confirm your selection for appointment as seasonal park ranger at Grand Teton National Park for the coming summer. Details concerning your appointment will be sent to you directly by the Superintendent of that park.

You are to be congratulated on being selected for one of our park ranger positions. The uniform you will be wearing is familiar to the millions of individuals who visit our national parks annually.

I am sure that your work assignment in one of the great areas of scenic beauty in this country will be both pleasant and rewarding.

Sincerely yours,

Secretary of the Interior

Mr. Robert G. Stanton
Student
Huston-Tillotson College
Austin, Texas

My situation, I think, perhaps mirrors some of the circumstances that confronted some of the other students. First, you had to provide for your own transportation, in my case from Texas to Wyoming. So that meant trains and bus fare. Also you had to have your uniform purchased before you arrived on duty. And then you had to have sufficient resources to carry you through for at least a week, possibly two weeks before you got your first paycheck. And the only people who could possibly assist me with those expenses were my mother and relatives, and nobody had $250 to loan or give a student to go out West.

So I went to a fellow by the name of Alton Horton in Euless. He was a very prominent white farmer and dairyman. My father had worked for him. I had worked for him on his farmland. And I went to him and asked, "Will you loan me $250?" He said, "Bob, I don't have that kind of disposable cash right now, but what I will do is cosign a loan for you at Arlington State Bank." And he cosigned a note for $250 that allowed me to purchase my uniform and to get my train ticket. When I got the first paycheck, I think I paid the loan back in one or two installments. So I'm sure there were a lot of youngsters who wanted to do it, but just didn't have the disposable income at that time to make that investment.

I'm sure it wasn't easy for you to approach him [Mr. Horton] either.

No, it wasn't.

We'll talk about this more as we get to it, but it sounds like from the beginning of your career there were always people there, whether it was family or friends, to support you.

No question. That has always been a consistent aspect of my personal, and particularly, my professional career. There has always been those who have been willing to help, which imposes a responsibility for me to help others as well.

Is there anything more you'd want to add about how those early experiences growing up in Mosier Valley and your college experiences shaped your career?

Yes. It was interesting going to Wyoming, just the newness, my first trip out of Texas, first train trip, and first time going to an integrated workforce with peers. I took the train from Fort Worth, Texas, to Rock Springs, Wyoming. Interesting place. And then from Rock Springs on a bus into Jackson Hole. I arrived probably a day earlier than when the letter said I was to report to the park. So I thought obviously there must be one or two black families here that I could stay with, because I didn't have money for a hotel room. I walked around and didn't see any black faces. So I inquired. "No, no black folks live up here." So I said, "Oh, what am I

going to do?" I went to a gentleman, Mr. George Lumley, who owned and operated a drugstore, and he also had some rental units, like a motel, and I told him my plight. And he said, "No problem. I'll just put you up for the night. And when you get paid, just come back and settle up with me." That was great.

In contrast with that is another experience that I had after working there for about a month. I worked primarily at the north entrance station for the park located in Moran, Wyoming. I lived with five other rangers in a nearby bunkhouse. We normally worked with a crew of two in rotating eight-hour shifts. One evening four of us decided to drive into Jackson, Wyoming, for the evening. One of the rangers was William "Bill" Kinard. He was from a historically black college, Livingstone College in North Carolina. But anyway there were four of us. When we arrived in Jackson Hole, we went to this particular lounge or bar to be served. The waiter approached the table and said, "Sorry, we can't serve you here." When we asked why, he repeated, "Sorry, we just can't serve you here." The four of us left. In Texas or North Carolina we expected it, but not in Wyoming. So there were still certain establishments in Wyoming pre-1964 Civil Rights Act that would not serve African Americans. But I contrast that experience with the generosity or benevolence on the part of the gentleman, the drugstore owner, who just extended himself.

Seasonal rangers Robert G. Stanton and William Kinard pose with the director of *Spencers Mountain*, actress Barbara McNair, and actor Henry Fonda, 1962. *National Park Service Historic Photograph Collection*

I must also tell you that shortly after Superintendent Harthon Bill, Russ Dickenson,[4] and Jack Davis learned of this incident, they apparently spoke with the business and civic leaders of Jackson Hole. In future visits to Jackson Hole, Bill Kinard and I had no difficulty being served in public facilities. This again is a reflection of the professionalism, concern for others, and leadership that I experienced as part of the Grand Teton staff in 1962.

GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK

But I must tell you a little bit about my first year's experience in Grand Teton. As I said before that's the first national park I ever visited. My parents had never been to a national park, nor my relatives, so no one had experienced national parks. In fact we didn't know about this thing called a vacation. During the summer you worked in the field. I mean that's it. Period.

Were you a seasonal by the way?

Seasonal, a seasonal ranger, following my junior year. Then I returned there following my senior year.

Please tell me more about the first year.

And I think that it was really the Teton experience in 1962 that influenced me to seriously consider at some point in time of pursuing a career with the National Park Service. So that's forty-two years ago. And I would still conclude today that as much as I know about national parks and about the people in the parks and policy of the parks with the opportunity that they afford, that I still could not have selected a better experience than what I had in 1962.

It was not so much the grandeur, the natural and magnificent beauty of Teton, year-round snowcapped mountains, etc. But what was really defined for me was the quality of the professional staff at Grand Teton. One has to realize that the Park Service, and particularly the parks where the African Americans were assigned, they had little to say about this. The secretary said in effect, "You are going to have African Americans working as rangers in the parks." So in some parks, unfortunately, because I met some of the rangers who worked that first year, too, they were merely accommodated by the professional staff. But I can say without any hesitation that the three African Americans, including myself, working at Grand Teton in '62 were warmly and truly welcomed to the workforce. It spoke volumes about the quality and the professional integrity of those who were there at Grand Teton in 1962.

There were some specific people there whom you said you wanted to talk about, weren't there?

Yes. The superintendent at that time was "Spud" Bill, Harthon "Spud" Bill. "Spud" was his nickname, just an outstanding professional. And later on I'll relate another experience with Mr. Spud Bill. But their number two, their deputy chief ranger was Jack Davis, who eventually became the associate director of the National Park Service. And the chief ranger, who is one of my great heroes today, will always be my hero, was Russell E. Dickenson. So that will give you some idea of the quality of people. Spud Bill and Russ Dickenson would continue to have a great deal of influence on my career. Jumping ahead...

I came permanently with the Park Service in 1966. Well, back up—I worked in Teton in '62, that was following my junior [year] at Huston-Tillotson, and then I graduated from Huston-Tillotson in '63. I didn't have a permanent job lined up, nothing. So I worked again as a seasonal ranger in Grand Teton. And the superintendent had changed at the time and others, but [they were] still tremendously high-quality folks.

While I was working there that summer I got a call from the president of the college, Dr. Seabrook. I said, "That's just great, to have the president call." He said, "Yes, Bob, we want to consider you for a position here on my staff as the director of public relations and alumni affairs, plus you'll receive a grant to do some graduate work in this field at Boston University. So I did graduate work at Boston University and then returned to Huston-Tillotson and worked as the director of public relations alumni affairs for two years. That was my alma mater and going out to high schools trying to attract students and working with the alumni and fund-raising, what have you, very rewarding emotionally and intellectually. But I said I'm going to take a look at the Park Service.

Interestingly enough, there were a couple of other people I met in Grand Teton who had a lot of influence on me. On my days off in Grand Teton I did what I knew best, working on the ranch helping put up hay. I worked on Three Rivers Ranch for the Jacobsen family. Jerry Jacobsen and his family were wonderful to work for and very supportive. But there also was a lady who had part ownership in the ranch and she would come out every summer from New York. She passed some years ago. We developed a tremendous friendship. Her name was Elises S. Undermeyer, a very prominent lady.

While I was working for Huston-Tillotson, I had the occasion to go to New York for some type of conference dealing with fund-raising for historically black colleges. And I called her and she said, "Bob, come on over." She lived on Park Avenue. And I'll never forget. I must have been 25. And I walked up to the doorman—this was a very prominent place. And I approached him and I said, "I'm calling on Mrs. Undermeyer." He was shocked to see a black

man calling on her. Mrs. Undermeyer and I had a great talk about the Tetons. But she said, "Bob, you may want to consider going into the Park Service," because things began to change with the Civil Rights Act and the federal government is becoming a little bit more affirmative in its employment program.

I took that counsel to heart and I had to weigh that against leaving Huston-Tillotson, because Huston-Tillotson had made an investment in me and it was just a wonderful opportunity. But I inquired with Russ and with Jack Davis and others and they said, "Well, we don't know what the opportunities are right now in the Park Service, but we do suggest you get in touch with a gentleman by the name of Gene Deao in NPS headquarters in Washington, D.C." Deao was head of recruitment for the Park Service in 1966. And I got in touch with him and he said, "Well, I'll work something out." So I came aboard in 1966 and was with the Park Service until I left office in 2001.

Did you have a sense of what kind of opportunities were available to African Americans in the Park Service at that time?

No, I didn't because there weren't many in the National Park Service with whom I could seek counsel. I came on as a GS-9. But there was another program that had been authorized as part of the Great Society program that had a tremendous impact on the Park Service with respect to hiring African Americans. This was the Job Corps program.[5]

Many African Americans first became acquainted with the National Park Service coming in through the Job Corps program as counselors or as teachers, or what have you. But I think I was the highest-ranking African American in the entire headquarters of the National Park Service. A fellow by the name of Delmar Robinson, I believe he was in financial management in the Western Region. He was a GS-11, but there was just a handful of us in the professional ranks.

WORKING IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

I was in the Washington office, in personnel management primarily, from 1966 until 1969 and then became the management assistant for National Capital Parks-Central that has the monument corridor, Lincoln [Memorial], Jefferson [Memorial]. When I came over to the region, the deputy was Russ Dickenson and the regional director, another outstanding fellow, was Nash Castro. Nash Castro retired and Russ Dickenson became the regional director. In 1970 George Hartzog was the director, one of my great friends, supporters, and mentors. Spud Bill, who was my superintendent at Grand Teton, now was the deputy to George Hartzog.[6] And Russ Dickenson is the regional director of the National Capital Region.

So George Hartzog, Spud Bill, his deputy, and Russ Dickenson did the same thing that Stewart Udall had done in 1962. They looked at the face of superintendents in the National Park Service and said, "We don't see any color, none whatsoever." So George Hartzog, Spud Bill, and Russ Dickenson made a decision: "Bob, we will appoint you superintendent of National Capital Parks-East." In 1970 I became the first African American appointed superintendent in the National Park Service.

The thing that really is troubling for me is, what happened between 1916 when the National Park Service was established and 1970? Why weren't African Americans in management positions during that period? Director Hartzog makes a point of that in his book, *Battling for the National Parks*. He states that here we have two national monuments established in the 1950s [honoring] two outstanding Americans who were African American, Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver, and then Congress approved in 1959, signed into law by President [Dwight D.] Eisenhower, the memorial to Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune that was constructed by the National Council of the Negro Women, but not dedicated until 1974. Congress also, during the Kennedy-Johnson Administration, passed legislation establishing the Frederick Douglass Home as part of the National Park System, signed into law September 1962. Hartzog reflected on [the fact that] there were no African Americans [in positions of authority]. So he observed that while we can respect the contribution and the sacrifice of African Americans who built our nation, why couldn't the Park Service recognize a few of these people as having the talent to manage parks? So they made a decision in 1970.

The thing that also is interesting is that prior to the establishment of the National Park Service in 1916 there was an African American who served as an acting superintendent of Sequoia National Park. At that time he was a captain, I believe, in the U.S. Army, Capt. Charles Young, who retired as a colonel. And it was Captain Young who really engineered the road system for Sequoia. But he was employed by the Army, not by the Park Service, because Yosemite and Sequoia were the two principal parks in California established before 1916 that were protected by the Buffalo Soldiers stationed out of the Presidio. They carried out that kind of stewardship before the National Park Service.

But it would seem to me that it would have been great having the history books reflect the involvement of African Americans in Yosemite and in Sequoia so that young people growing up, even in the segregated school situation, would have had some appreciation that African Americans were contributing to the preservation of our natural heritage. But the history books had been void of this, so it wasn't until 1970 that we moved more directly with African Americans in leadership positions.

Moved forward. When you look at the loss to the Park Service of that talent from 1916 to 1970, do you think of it more as simply a reflection of the broader society or do you see any relationship to the culture of the Park Service?

It could possibly be a mixture, but I think it was sort of a mirror of our society's acceptance of Jim Crow laws or practices of discrimination or segregation. But since there wasn't a major push by various organizations or by governmental entities to really practice equal opportunity in their employment practices, they just sort of went along with the crowd.

Certainly the Park Service wasn't the exception, in terms of the other federal agencies.

That's right. No question about it. Other federal agencies had the same profile in terms of their staffs. But certainly with the passage of many of the civil rights laws in the '60s all federal agencies had to move aggressively in this area. And, of course, the 1964 Civil Rights Act speaks to the establishment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to give some direction to this. But prior to that there just wasn't that major push for equal opportunity. And, of course, with the civil rights movement efforts intensified to eliminate discriminatory practices being carried out by our government, so to speak. So you're right. Up until that time there was just sort of passive approach to the employment [of African Americans]. Obviously, there were notable exceptions in some agencies or what have you, but on a large scale that was just not the case.

I understand that you had some role models from a very young age, and they include people like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., John Kennedy, and Frederick Douglass. Does this sort of fit into [your interest in promoting the employment of African Americans]?

It does. That's one of the beauties of the National Park System. I certainly embrace our individual and collective stewardship responsibilities of preserving nature, if you will, in parks and all that that entails. We have a responsibility to preserve and to protect, and certainly to provide the public understanding and appreciation of their natural environment. But if you were to take a look at the now 380-plus-unit park system, three-fourths of the units speak to something about our human history and development. And obviously some of the stories told or events commemorated in the national parks are not those things for which we as a nation should be most proud. But nevertheless they are places that should give us some hope that we can move beyond those kinds of difficulties "toward a more perfect union." And I get my strength from those who have made contributions to those freedoms and

liberties that we enjoy today, who have come through those pathways through struggle, like a Frederick Douglass, or Martin Luther King, Jr., or Mary McLeod Bethune.

And what has happened is interesting in terms of growth of the National Park System. I liken that to a maturing of us as a people, as a nation, that we now can recognize some of our mistakes with the hope that we can learn and grow from them. I mean who would have thought that we would now have a unit in the park system that commemorates our internment of fellow Americans because of our fear or because of their ancestry? So we do that at Manzanar National Historic Site. Who thought that we would deny citizens a full opportunity to vote because they couldn't pay the poll tax or fees or didn't have the necessary literacy? So we do have Selma to Montgomery [National Historic Trail] now that speaks to the right to vote.

We seem to be a little more willing to deal with some of the difficult aspects, the painful aspects, of our history.

I often quote Dr. John Hope Franklin, another one of my heroes.[7] Dr. Franklin, as you know, is the immediate past chair for the National Park System Advisory Board. And I keep for reference purposes a transcript of his remarks at *Discovery 2000*[8] in which he states that the "sad places of history are not places where we should wallow in remorse, but rather be moved to a higher resolve to become better citizens."

I think the word that you used "maturing" is probably the key there.

Yes, that's right. But I just made mention about the growth of the park system so again, when I first worked as a seasonal in '62, notwithstanding that African Americans have played a significant role in the development of this nation, the Revolutionary War, Civil War, War of 1812, the agricultural industry, etc. Of course, we built about everything from the White House to the U.S. Capitol, but our contributions weren't reflected in our history books or at our national park areas. So when I first worked in '62, there had been three areas in the park system established by an act of Congress to commemorate African Americans. In the '50s with George Washington Carver and Booker T. Washington [national monuments],[9] and then President Eisenhower signed civil rights legislation into law. But today there are seventeen areas, plus the Underground Railroad,[10] and that has given me a great deal of encouragement. Plus, there is a major effort on the part of the Park Service to talk about the primary themes at Harpers Ferry Historical Park or at Fort Davis, but also to talk [about the fact] that there were African Americans who made significant contributions in those events and places. Because, when reading the textbooks, you got the immediate impression that

John Brown's raiders, or those who were part of his alliance, were only white folks striving to help them, but there were at least five or six African Americans among John Brown's raiders. Why don't the history books tell us that?

Would you talk for a few more minutes about your relationship with George Hartzog? It seems to have spanned the years.

Yes. As I said before, I came into the Washington office in 1966. He was the director. He had come into the office, I believe in '64. He succeeded Connie Wirth,[11] who was appointed by President Eisenhower and was retained by President Kennedy, and Johnson, and Stewart Udall for a year or so, and then Connie was replaced with Director Hartzog. I think George Hartzog must have been in office maybe a couple of years before I came permanently with the Park Service in '66. But he was involved in my initial appointment, not personally but through his staff, of going to a management position over in the National Capital Region. And, obviously, he was personally involved in my appointment as the superintendent of National Capital Parks-East.

VIRGIN ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK

And then I was in National Capital Parks-East, serving in my first superintendency. I enjoyed working with the community. My wife Janet was working at HUD [Department of Housing and Urban Development]. We had one child, Rhonda. She was about two or three years of age. My wife and I had saved enough to fulfill an American dream: we bought our first home in Bowie, Maryland. I will never forget. I was out to a community meeting or something, and came back, and Bobbie Woodside had called. Bobbie Woodside was the secretary to Russ Dickenson. He was the regional director. She said, "Mr. Hartzog wants you to call him." I said, "Oh my, call the director?" So I called Director Hartzog.

He is a strong person, very charming person. And I was able to reach him. "Hi, my friend. How is your bride doing?" he said. "Bob, I need you in the Virgin Islands." I said, "Mr. Hartzog, I just moved into my first superintendency, and my wife is working." "Well, Bob, I understand. I'll tell you what you do. I want you and your bride go down to the Virgin Islands for a week and visit there with the park. Take a look around. Then let me know. But before going down I want you to go down to the Southeast Region to see the deputy regional director, Charlie [Charles S.] Marshall." At that time the Southeast Region was in Richmond, Virginia. So I did that. But I knew that I should be packing up for the Virgin Islands, and I did.

Being the superintendent of the Virgin Islands National Park, it was a great experience, probably one of the best decisions I made early in my career. It allowed me

to experience a certain situation that enabled me to advance my own professional development, because, for one thing, geographically I was far removed from the regional director. I couldn't just go and visit with him and get counsel and support. So I had to deal with a lot of management issues.

Learn to handle them on your own.

And there was a lot of concern by the governor, the late Governor Mel Evans, about the Park Service and its relationship with his office, with the local community. There was some tension there. And that was one thing that George Hartzog wanted me to address: to develop a better relationship with the governor and with the legislature, as well as address some land acquisition needs. So I knew what my charges were, and it could be just a magnificent opportunity and experience. I really enjoyed working with the late Governor Evans and his staff. I just really enjoyed the community and Virgin Island citizens so much.

One of the highlights of that experience was to host an official visit by the House Interior Subcommittee headed at that time by Congressman Roy Taylor of North Carolina. And one of the things I wanted to do was not only acquaint them with some of the issues in terms of management and land acquisition and development, certainly the funding needs as well, but also to show them the relationship between the park and the Virgin Islands government and the community. We hosted a beach reception for the chairman and his committee. And there was an outpouring by the community. It was absolutely great. We also expressed to him some of the land acquisition needs and what have you. At that time we were encumbered by a legislative ceiling in terms of how much money Congress could appropriate toward land acquisition. And after he got a good picture of our needs, etc., immediately when he returned to Congress, he wrote a bill that lifted the ceiling. So it was a great meeting, a great tour. I was superintendent there for two and a half years.

While I was there, there was a change in the directorship. Director Hartzog, as he would say quite candidly, "I was fired." And he said this in his book. He was replaced by Ron Walker,[12] who came directly out of the White House. And Ron and I developed a close relationship. He visited with me for a week there in the Virgin Islands, gave a courtesy call on the governor, etc. While I was the superintendent at the Virgin Islands National Park, Russ Dickenson had been selected by Ron Walker to become his deputy. He was pleased with the job I was doing there in the Virgin Islands. So I got a call shortly after Ron returned from the trip. It might have been after a month, two months. I got a call from Russ Dickenson, "Bob, would you consider becoming the new deputy regional director for the Southeast Region." So I came into the Southeast Region.

Before you make the next move. I wanted to ask you, you mentioned earlier a Noble Samuel. Did you encounter him at the Virgin Islands?

Noble was perhaps my closest friend, confidant, advisor. He was a hero of mine. Yes, Noble was a management assistant there. He called me and said, "Bob, I'm going to leave the Park Service." I said, "Hey, Noble, what are you going to do?" He said, "I'm going to run for the Senate." The Virgin Islands has a one-house legislature. They have, I think, thirteen senators representing specific districts within the three major islands. And then they have two senators at large. Noble ran for one of the at-large [seats] and won. He served two terms in the legislature, and then after that he became the administrator of the island of St. John. Then I think he came back to the Park Service for a little stint. He now lives on St. Croix, but his health is failing. He is just a jewel of a fellow, just a jewel of a fellow—Noble Samuel.

You mentioned that one of the reasons that Hartzog said he wanted you to go there was because there were some tensions between the park and the community?

There was not the most favorable relationship between the Park Service, the governor's office, the legislature, and particularly the citizens of the Virgin Islanders in terms of good community relations between the park and those whom we served in the local areas. We did a number of things working closely with the governor and with the legislature to improve these relationships.

One of the major tasks I had was to work out a revised memorandum of agreement between the National Park Service and the Virgin Island government with respect to managing the Christiansted National Historic Site on St. Croix, because some of the properties within the historic district were occupied by the Virgin Island government. We had to work out arrangements so that their use was compatible with the preservation of that district, and furthermore that the Park Service recognized what their administrative needs were. So we were able to work out a very acceptable agreement to all parties concerned.

Also in 1972 we celebrated the centennial of Yellowstone. There was a national celebration and Governor Evans fully embraced that celebration and recognized that the Virgin Islands National Park and Christiansted National Historic Site and Buck Island Reef were important to the people of the Virgin Islands, in addition to accommodating a million visitors from all over to those beautiful islands. So he declared a National Park Week in the Virgin Islands.

But I guess one of the highlights of my career there was to be invited to be the graduation speaker at the Julius Sprauve Junior High School on St. John. So that was a highlight.

You felt like you had made some progress in that area by the time you left in terms of those relationships.

Yes. In fact I got a copy of, the Park Service at the time had a publication called *The Courier*, which did a little profile on the Virgin Islands National Park and spoke about some of the relationships. I was very proud of that. But also in the Virgin Islands I got to know Mr. Laurance Rockefeller. Do you know much about the history of the Virgin Islands National Park?

No, I don't.

Congress passed legislation in August, it could have passed maybe in June or July, but it was signed into law by President Eisenhower in August 1956. That same year in December of '56, Laurance Rockefeller handed over a deed to Connie Wirth, then the director of the Park Service, and Fred A. Seaton, then the secretary of the Interior, a deed for 5,000 acres of St. John. And he [Rockefeller] visited there while I was the superintendent so I had an opportunity to meet him. He was extremely generous in that, in addition to donating the 5,000 acres, he retained some portions of land within the park boundary, Caneel Bay Plantation, which is one of the most prominent resort areas in the U.S. Virgin Islands. He has since sold all of his interest in that and has stipulated that after a lapse of so many years all of those properties will revert to the American people as a part of the Virgin Island National Park.

Virgin Islands National Park Superintendent Robert G. Stanton meets with Governor Melvin H. Evans and National Park Service Director Ronald H. Walker.

I worked closely with him and his assistants, Mr. Wes Fry and Mr. Henry Diamond, to transfer his ranch in Grand Teton National Park to the National Park Service on behalf of the American people. Then on my watch he transferred the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller estate to the National Park Service and participated in the opening of that. And Mrs. Johnson, Lady Bird Johnson, came up for that program. It must have been in 1999 or 2000. That's jumping ahead. But in the Virgin Islands, I really enjoyed that. That was great. I enjoyed the people most of all.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, PARK OPERATIONS

So you went on to work for Russ Dickenson, I mean directly under him.

No. From the Virgin Islands I became the deputy for the Southeast Region in Atlanta for two years. And then there was a change. Let me see. There was a change in administration because when Ron Walker left and President [Richard M.] Nixon left, President [Gerald R.] Ford came in and he appointed Gary Everhardt.[13] Gary Everhardt, when he was appointed the director of the Park Service, was the superintendent at Grand Teton. I was home one Saturday. I was probably doing some "honey do" things for my wife and I got a call from Gary Everhardt, director of the Park Service. Gary said, "Hey, Bob, how are things going?" I said, "Fine, Mr. Director." "Bob, I need you here in Washington." I said, "Gary, I..." "It's about coming up to Washington." So I came to Gary Everhardt's staff. Gary Everhardt was the director, Bill [William J.] Briggle was the deputy, and he had an associate by the name of John Cook. And John had under him three assistant directors, Phil Stewart, Ray Freeman, and yours truly.[14]

That was for Park Operations?

Park Operations, yes, right.

So what was it like working for John Cook?

Fine. John and I had gone back; our careers sort of came together. We were sort of peers in terms of our superintendencies and what have you. And John is second or third generation Park Service, just an outstanding mentor, too. He taught me a lot. But I need to back up a little bit. I need to back up with respect to John Cook and some others. Again, just the Hartzog influence.

When I was superintendent of National Capital Park-East, my first superintendency, Director Hartzog had gone to the Federal Executive Institute in Charlottesville. He was one of the first executives to go to that new executive training facility. He was pleased with the

quality of instruction there and he felt that it would be helpful if some of his young managers were to have a similar experience. So he and Spud Bill, the deputy director, handpicked 20 or 25 young careerists, some in staff positions, some in parks. And I've often wondered, so I asked the director, "How did you go about selecting these folks?" And he gave me a little spiel in terms of how he did it.

I have a picture [of the training class] and I often look at it. All of them are retired now, with the exception of one. But out of those whom he picked, most of us were civilian GS-11s, 13s, maybe a sprinkling of 14s, sort of mid-managers. Out of those he picked, six or possibly eight became regional directors and two became directors of the Park Service, Bill Whalen[15] and yours truly. I thought that was interesting. The only one who is still [working], no, there are two: Bryan Harry, who is state director for the National Park Service in Hawaii (I think he's still working); and Ann Bowman Smith, who's the associate regional director for the White House Liaison in the National Capital Region. I think those are the only two who are still working now. But the percentage who became regional directors just...

So he had had a real talent for seeing quality?

Yes. That's right. And John Cook was one. Yes.

Was [attending the Federal Executive Institute] a good experience?

Oh yes, we were there for two weeks. We bonded. It was great.

It must have been quite a different experience coming back to the headquarters like that, taking a position now at a higher level within the headquarters. Was there an adjustment there for you? I sense that it's probably a more political environment for operating.

Oh, no question about that. Yes. I had four tours of duty in the national office, my first appointment in 1966, and coming back as the assistant director for Gary Everhardt. And then coming back as the associate director under Bill Mott. And then coming back as the director. Yes, at each position you get a little bit more involved in the policy and the budgetary and congressional affairs, and certainly the whole political arena from local to international political situations. So you're right, it's sort of a different perspective.

I think that's one of the remarkable things about your career is that you had the opportunity to see the Service, see the park system, from so many different levels.

That's right. And that's very helpful, too, to have the experience at those three levels, the parks, region, and the national. No question about that.

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

And your next move then was to NCR, to the National Capital Region?

Yes.

That was in 1978, as the regional director?

In 1978. I was the assistant director for operations. And then there was a change in administration. When President [Jimmy] Carter came into office, Bill Whalen came in succeeding Gary Everhardt. Ira Hutchinson came in as deputy. And I was reassigned from the assistant director to the deputy director of the National Capital Region. And I think they brought in as my successor Boyd Evison. Boyd was superintendent of the Great Smokies when he was brought in as the assistant director of operations. I was the deputy for Jack Fish, again another outstanding professional, one of my heroes. I was Jack's deputy for eight years. Jack must have served as regional director for probably thirteen years. I left the deputy to go to my first SES [Senior Executive Service] position, which was the associate director for operations under Bill Mott and Deny Galvin.

And that relationship with Bill Mott, was that another significant one?

Yes. Bill was just a tremendous man of stature and integrity and a professional all the way. And he wanted the Park Service to be the very, very best that it could be. Bill and I spent a lot of time together. And I really got to know him when I served as the acting regional director for maybe a year or so while Jack was out due to illness. Then he brought me in as his associate and then when Jack retired, Bill Mott appointed me regional director for the National Capital Region.

I think in the book[16] [there was] the statement that Mott was one of your heroes for strengthening interpretation and education programs.

That's right.

And for expanding training opportunities and protection of natural resources.

That's right, yes, very much. He knew the value and the importance of the interpretive and education program. And Bill was an inclusive person. He understood and appreciated the

diversity of park resources and the importance of sharing the diversity of resources with a diverse audience. He understood that.

And in becoming regional director in NCR, this is 1988, this made you the highest-ranking African American in the Park Service?

No, I had a peer. Herb Cables was the first African American to become a regional director in Boston.[17] Herb Cables, was superintendent of Gateway [National Recreation Area] where he succeeded, I think, Ira Hutchinson. Ira became the deputy, African American deputy under Bill Whalen. And then Herb was the deputy under Jim Ridenour[18] in the Bush Administration. Yes. Both are retired now.

I have gotten the sense that NCR is one of the regions that because of its location and the fact that it encompasses the national monuments, and there's Capitol Hill there and the White House, that it's a region that's more in the limelight than the others. I wondered if you would discuss just some of the challenges in working closely with Congress and with the White House, certainly closer than other regional directors would have to on a daily basis.

Well, you pretty much described it. It was absolutely a fantastic operation. And its location obviously has a great deal to do with it, in the nation's capital. Not only do you respond to the interests and the needs of the local population, because there are many, many of the local residents in the greater Washington metropolitan area who use these parks and monuments and the Mall on a day-to-day basis, but also then, of course, you accommodate millions of national and international visitors.

Just in terms of members of Congress, the White House staff, members of the president's Cabinet, this and prior Cabinets, everyone of them see and look at the National Capital Region operation daily. The president lives in a national historic site. Members of Congress may travel through Rock Creek Park, the George Washington Memorial Parkway, the Baltimore [Washington] Parkway, or Suitland Parkway en route to their office. They see the Park Service everyday. Looking out their window, they see the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, and sometimes they're happy, sometimes they're not. When they're not, they let you know. And it's that kind of close proximity, the people know you up front and personal, that makes for an interesting set of circumstances. Certainly the secretary of the Interior and the director of the Park Service look out over your parks everyday. They know what's going on and what they like and what they don't like. So you're right, it does involve working closely with members of Congress.

But I enjoyed it. I mean I just sort of thrived on the intensity of it. The regional director position literally is a seven-day-[a-week] operation. But the great joy was the dedication and support that I had from an outstanding staff, the superintendents, their staffs, the U.S. Park Police, and others. They were absolutely phenomenal. And a lot of support, bipartisan support, for all of the activities. But one of the other things that obviously sets apart the operation of the National Capital Region is the hosting of all kinds of First Amendment rights activities, marches, protests.

The Park Service has the responsibility to ensure that the individual and groups of thousands can exercise their constitutional right of freedom of speech through a wide range of demonstration and protest activities. And the Park Service tries to do that to the best of its ability in terms of crowd control, safety, sanitation, and coordinating other kinds of logistical support.

Working with the Metropolitan Police?

Yes, working closely, because the other interesting point is, you have multiple jurisdictions that operate in the Washington, D.C. area and have to work very closely. You have the U.S. Capitol Police. You have the Metropolitan Police, the Secret Service, Protective Service, the embassies, the General Services Administration that has responsibility for some government buildings, the Smithsonian. You have to work closely for all of these kinds of activities, because the demonstrators or protesters can quickly move from one jurisdiction to another jurisdiction. As an example, the Park Service doesn't have jurisdiction over the entire length of Constitution Avenue. So if you're marching, say, from the Washington Monument going onto 15th [Street], then 14th, to get on Constitution and proceeding toward the Capitol, you're under the jurisdiction of the D.C. government. But if you're on Constitution, 15th up to the Lincoln Memorial, the Park Service.

So what were some of the other challenges of being regional director in the National Capital Region? [Do] any stand out? It sounds like that whole issue of First Amendment rights might have been a difficult one.

Yes, because you never know when there might be a crowd that says "We want to come here and protest," whatever their grievance might be. You must also be responsive to the various interests and needs of the public whom you're trying to serve. In addition to accommodating tourists who are coming into the nation's capital to experience the monuments, the memorials, just for a day or two days, whatever the case may be, you have those citizens who live on the boundary of Anacostia Park or Rock Creek Park who have needs as well. So you've got to try

to be as responsive to those who live in that area and who enjoy the park on a daily basis, in contrast with those who just come in maybe once in a lifetime, and to balance all of those needs.

I imagine security was an issue for you.

Yes, it was, because we had all kinds of scares when I was there. As you may recall some years back, a gentleman drove a van truck up to the base of the Washington Monument. And he was there with a little gadget in his hand and announced that he had the truck full of explosives. In the final analysis, he got in the truck and attempted to leave the Washington Monument grounds. The decision was made that he would not do that, so he was killed as he was trying to move. So there had been various kinds of scares like that.

One of the other major challenges in the National Capital Region is preserving these national icons. The Lincoln Memorial, as an example, dedicated in the'20s. The Jefferson Memorial in the '40s. The Washington Monument dedicated in the late 1800s. So these are old monuments in terms of preservation; they need a lot of attention.

But one of the other major activities in which the Park Service is involved and is working cooperatively with the National Capital Planning Commission, the Fine Arts Commission, the National Advisory Council for Historic Preservation, and others is the planning of new memorials for the nation's capital. Take a look at the recent number that have been added: the Korean War Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, the World War II Memorial. There are a number of other memorials that have been authorized by Congress in various stages of planning, design, or fund-raising: a memorial to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the Black Revolutionary Patriots Memorial, Benjamin Banneker, and the Peace Garden. The planning for all of that requires a lot of negotiation with the sponsoring organization, working with Congress to make sure that the language is tailored so that everyone understands what the requirements are. Just a lot of involvement with the local as well as national commissions that have oversight responsibility for what takes place under the National Park Service in Washington.

What impact do you think that particular experience, your years as regional director at NCR, ultimately had on your tenure as director? Can you point to anything and say, "This influenced me."?

Well, certainly it sharpens your sensitivities with respect to the demands confronting the superintendents on a day-to-day basis and what should be the responsibility on the part of the regional staff to give those superintendents support. And that sort of transfers to what the

real responsibilities of the director are, which is to give support to the regional directors and they in turn give support to the park. That brings a lot of credence to the role and responsibility of park superintendents. You've got to give support to where the action is, so to speak. It's a great appreciation for the distinction of responsibilities.

Robert G. Stanton joins prominent civil rights leader Dr. Dorothy Height at a ceremony at the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial, 1982.

Was there some benefit from dealing with congressional representatives on a daily basis, too? I mean getting experience that would help you as director as well?

Yes, because you have to understand and appreciate the role of Congress and the legislative process in terms of the interaction between the other branch of government, the executive branch, and to understand what their respective roles are and not succumb to any personal embarrassment or feeling that you're being rejected personally when Congress disagrees with your testimony or budget request. Understand that there is a responsibility Congress has to provide some oversight through the legislative process, hearings, as an example, or GAO [Government Accountability Office] reports.

It was because of my proximity to Congress and their interest in what was taking place in the nation's capital and the environ that there was a lot of interaction between individual members of Congress as well as the committees and their staffs. You develop a better appreciation of what their agenda is and how best to respond to the agenda, but not do it in such a way that you diminish the responsibilities and authorities of the executive branch.

I had a lot of interaction with members of Congress and I enjoyed it. As an example, when I was the director, I was sworn in on August 4 by Secretary Babbitt, probably was in the office for about two weeks, and I got a call from Chairman Ralph Regula of the House Subcommittee on Appropriations. He said, "Bob, I want you to come on up. We want to talk to you about a hearing we're going to have." So we had a meeting about the cost of housing in Yosemite and Grand Canyon, and you read a lot about this $700,000 comfort facility at the Delaware Water Gap [National Recreation Area]. And you want to say, "It did not happen my watch." There were intense hearings on that. So trying to get a handle on the planning, design, and construction program sort of changed my whole agenda for the next two or three months. And I had not anticipated that coming into the office. But it happens, you see. Priorities can change at a rapid pace.

But I might back up just in terms of working with Congress. Again, I enjoyed Congress and got great bipartisan support when I was in the National Capital Region and certainly when I became the director of the Park Service. As you know Congress passed legislation in 1996 requiring that the director for the very first time be subject to Senate confirmation. And so by being the first director to go through the process, obviously I could not confer with Director Hartzog or Roger Kennedy[19] or anyone else in terms of how do you do it. I was sort of breaking new ground.

But I did know that a presidential nominee, who was subject to Senate confirmation, can request or ask a member or members of the Senate to offer testimony in his or her support before their peers. So I said to myself, "Well I know how this works." I wanted a bipartisan approach. Two highly respected senators would offer testimony before the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources chaired by Frank Murkowski. So I asked Senator Sarbanes, Paul Sarbanes, from Maryland, whom I worked very closely with for a number of years on a number of projects not only in the state of Maryland but throughout the country, a great, great park supporter, and Senator John Warner. John and I, too, had worked on a number of programs. And John, of course, had served as secretary of the Navy. I think it was in the Nixon Administration. But he worked on a number of memorials in D.C. He's a veteran himself. And so both of them appeared on my behalf to support me before the committee. I said, "Oh, he sounds so good." I thought to myself. But no, it was great. I enjoyed great bipartisan support.

You know one thing that Roger Kennedy did talk about was the importance of developing personal relationships with individual congressmen, asking about their wives and their children, and seeing them as individuals. Would you agree?

Yes, although I didn't necessarily take that approach. My sense is that all members of Congress have a genuine interest in the parks, they really do. There may be a little difference in their orientation in terms of what their priorities would be. But when all is said and done, there is a great caring for the parks on the part of the members of Congress. And so there's a mutual area in which you can have dialogue and you can develop relationships. But we had an opportunity, because of the proximity to Congress, to interact with them in many social or ceremonial functions, at performances at Ford's Theatre, at the Kennedy Center, at Wolf Trap. You could see them in a social setting and develop those relationships.

Just as an example, I'm a member of the board of directors of the Student Conservation Association,[20] which has a great relationship with Unilever Company and the Park Foundation and the Park Service with respect to its congressional interns. So I went to a reception and had a chance to get reacquainted with the Senator Craig Thomas, who was a great supporter of the parks, a great supporter of me personally and professionally, although we differed on some views in terms of snowmobiles in Yellowstone. Just a great relationship. So it was good to see him there. So you're right. And I enjoyed working closely with Senator Robert Byrd, on a number of issues and challenges and opportunities in West Virginia and throughout the national parks.

PART

TWO

JUNE 4, 2004
FAIRFAX STATION, VIRGINIA

VAIL AGENDA

I would like to just finish up with a couple of things that happened in the years before your tenure as director such as the Vail conference.[21] Were you involved in the planning for that?

Yes, I was involved in the planning of it, working with Director Jim Ridenour and Deputy Director Herb Cables and their planning team.

And what were some of the things that you were considering? What were some of the goals of [the conference], do you recall?

Yes, well there were primarily two focuses. One was to strengthen the preservation role of the National Park Service. [One of] Director Ridenour's priorities was to strengthen the resource preservation capacity of the National Park Service and to engage park employees at the park regional and national level in that endeavor. The other was to review the quality of the visitors' services program not only in terms of interpretation and education, but law enforcement, the whole smear of the visitors' services programs, including those that are provided by nongovernmental entities, i.e. concessionaires and cooperating associations.

So it was a comprehensive review of all of the activities being conducted by the Park Service. Then out of that evolved some priorities, if you will, that resulted in the so-called Vail Agenda. The Vail Agenda was really a philosophical rather than practical statement of what the director as a member of the [George H.W.] Bush Administration wanted to accomplish, working with Secretary [of the Interior] Manuel Lujan and others to carry forth those programs.

What were your impressions of the agenda that resulted? Did you feel it was strong enough, for example?

Yes, it was strong. Agendas often become extremely ambitious, and perhaps this was an ambitious one, because it touched upon every facet of Park Service operations and management. But by and large I embraced the recommendations set forth in the Vail Agenda.

There was one legislative measure that came out of it, something that I was a very strong advocate on, just to give you one example of a byproduct of the Vail Agenda. It started during the Hartzog administration. Each year Congress would authorize through the appropriation process a measure that would allow the National Park Service to use appropriated funds, or a combination of appropriated and donated funds, to transport young people from neighboring communities into the parks for cultural enrichment, environmental-education-type programs, and that continued.

Then as a response to the Vail Agenda, which encouraged more visitation and more use by the young people in terms of their own natural and cultural heritage, I chaired a working group that developed a legislative proposal that would give the Park Service permanent authority to transport young people into parks. And Congress did in fact enact that legislation so the Park Service had perpetual legislative authority to work with neighboring school districts, youth service organizations, the private community to get youths into the parks so they could have the full benefit of their own heritage resources.

Education outreach.

Yes, that's correct.

That certainly sounds like one of the tangible outcomes from the Vail meeting and the agenda.

Yes.

I just wondered if you'd talk for a few minutes about some of the positive results, in addition to the one you mentioned, from that meeting. Is there anything else that comes to mind about Vail?

It's always difficult to evaluate the result, but what happened, as you may recall, with the Vail Agenda, it was developed during President Bush's administration with Jim Ridenour as the leader and Secretary Lujan. I don't recall the date in which the Vail Agenda was approved and distributed widely. But then there was a change of administration and then the director, Jim Ridenour's successor, Director Kennedy, was confronted with some budgetary and personnel reduction challenges. Therefore, there may have been inadequate resources to allocate to some of the priorities that were set forth in the Vail Agenda. Also shortly after Director Kennedy came on board we went through a major reorganization. We felt the need to reduce the central office's staff and absorb the loss of FTEs [full-time equivalent positions], something we'll get into a little later. So I don't know whether or not, had the budgetary condition of the Park Service been more favorable for an extended period of time after the Vail Agenda, whether or not many of the other recommendations would have been acted upon. It's just hard to say.

But that document still stands [as a reference] for people.

It does. I think the Vail Agenda is really the reaffirmation of what the National Park Service is all about. It recommits the Service to its Organic Act[22] and to the mission of the Park Service. But it also takes into consideration the contemporary social and political issues that were not envisioned when Congress crafted the 1916 Act establishing the Park Service, just in terms of population growth, the ease of transportation, telecommunications. Certain conditions in our society changed. Therefore, the Vail Agenda was trying to determine how the National Park Service could continue to meet the letter and spirit of its mandate as set forth in the Organic Act, but also be very sensitive to the changed social and political environment in which it managed the national parks.

REORGANIZATION

You gave me a great segue into the 1995 reorganization.[23] Correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe you were part of a working group for that?

Yes, I was, appointed by Director Kennedy and Deputy Director John Reynolds to be a part of an operations team that was to develop for the director's consideration a series of options on how the Park Service could function within the newly authorized reduction in FTEs. What had happened is that shortly after President [William J.] Clinton came into office Vice President [Al] Gore initiated a program to improve the efficiency of the operation of the government. And he had called for a program that would substantially reduce the number of employees required by the federal government to carry out its programs.[24] In pursuing that initiative, Congress also got interested in it and by law established a reduction, which I think exceeded the number of employees that were to be reduced from the administration initiative under the leadership of Vice President Gore.

To make a long story short, Interior was advised by OMB [Office of Management and Budget] as to the number of FTEs it would have to reduce in order to be supportive of the legislative mandate as well as Vice President Gore's program. As I recall, the National Park Service's share of the overall Interior reduction was roughly 1,100 FTEs. So the director, as I understand it, in discussion with Secretary Babbitt, the director agreed that the Service would abolish certain positions. He asked the secretary to relieve the Park Service of some of the reduction if it would allocate some of the positions in the central offices to the parks.

It was something of a compromise with the secretary, just to take across the board reduction of X amount of FTEs for a number of programs and a number of people, and therefore, recognizing that the greatest need for our increased staff perhaps was in the parks. If the secretary would give some relief to the director, the director would make a commitment to reduce the central office staff. And that is exactly what Director Kennedy did.

To avoid the "salami slice" approach[25] as it's called.

That's right. So he asked a team of park, regional, and Washington managers and staff to take a look at how he could reduce central office positions and allocate those FTEs to the parks. There was a series of recommendations developed in terms of consolidating central offices, abolishing some programs in the central offices. But the most significant recommendation that came out of it, which was approved by Director Kennedy and Interior Secretary Babbitt, was to abolish three of the ten regional offices. To abolish the Pacific Northwest Regional office in Seattle; the North Atlantic Regional Office in Boston; and the Southwest Regional Office in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

But, as with the case of abolishing any federal office, there are some realities that come into play. One of the major recommendations from the reorganization was to abolish three regional offices. However, because of the need to have support staff in those locations and because of some interest on the part of the congressional delegations in Washington, New Mexico, and Massachusetts not to reduce the number of federal employees within their states, it was agreed that the number of employees in the old regional offices would be reduced, but a significant number would be retained there to serve as support functions to the parks. Consequently they became what they called support offices, operational units of the restructured regional offices in those areas.

As an example, the support office in Santa Fe is an organizational unit of the Intermountain Region. The support office in Seattle is the operational unit of the Pacific West Region, and the one in Boston is a unit of the Northeast Region in Philadelphia. As a result of that realignment a number of employees were reassigned to parks and there were some vacant positions. Those, too, were reallocated to the parks. So in theory it made sense, because one could argue that most of the work of the Park Service was done at the park level. That made good business sense. But there was initial expense involved of relocating employees from central offices to the parks. We had to pick up their traveling expenses, home relocation costs, etc.

And maybe it prompted greater decentralization within the National Park Service?

Yes, that's right. One of the arguments was, too, that with the reduction of regional offices from ten to seven, it would follow that regional directors would have an increased span of control. Let's take as an example the Intermountain Region, which now extends from one border to another, from the Canadian border at Glacier National Park to the border for Mexico with Big Bend [National Park]. The regional director there has a tremendous span of control. So one of the ways to compensate for that is to improve the capacity of the individual park superintendents to manage their program without having a lot of oversight and support from the regional offices. This therefore necessitates giving them [the superintendents] more delegated authority as well as more technical capability to administer their programs.

Was there a downside to that, particularly later, from the vantage point of director? Is there a downside to having such a decentralized structure and so much authority at the park level?

I don't know if it's a downside. I just think that if you hold to the theory, which I do, that the responsibility for managing the National Park System and the program of the National Park Service is vested by law in one individual in the National Park Service, that's the director. In order for the director to discharge his span of control and to ensure that the programs are being carried out in ways consistent with policy, regulatory procedures, and standards. The director has to rely on the employees who carry out those programs. And therefore, the director has responsibility for the entire breadth of the National Park System from the South Pacific to Maine, from Alaska to the U.S. Virgin Islands. The director has seven people who have the responsibility to advise him as to what's taking place in those parks on a day-to-day basis. If he has a concern about what's taking place in Glacier, Grand Teton, or Big Bend or any place, theoretically he or she has only one person to call—the regional director. Then the regional director needs to be comfortable that when he calls the superintendent of Big Bend, for example, that that person is on top of what's going on.

So it is difficult, it is difficult for the director to know what's going on every day throughout the breadth of the National Park System. It's also equally difficult for a regional director to know what's going on each day within his region, but that's his responsibility. He has that geographical area of control. So what you have to rely on is the capability of the regional directors.

BECOMING DIRECTOR

I'll move on to your period as director then. You retired in January of 1997. And then came back and in August of that year were sworn in as the 15th director. Can you tell me just a little bit about how that happened, how you were approached?

Yes. I had announced my plans to retire in October of 1996 to become effective January 3, 1997. And then I received a call from Secretary Babbitt. Director Kennedy had left office. Deny Galvin was acting. Babbitt said, "The president and I are considering nominating you for the directorship." And he said, "But there's no guarantee, so I know that you, Bob, have already made your plans to retire and since there are no guarantees you may just want to proceed with those plans," which I did. And employees and friends gave me a tremendous farewell party in December. So I retired in January.

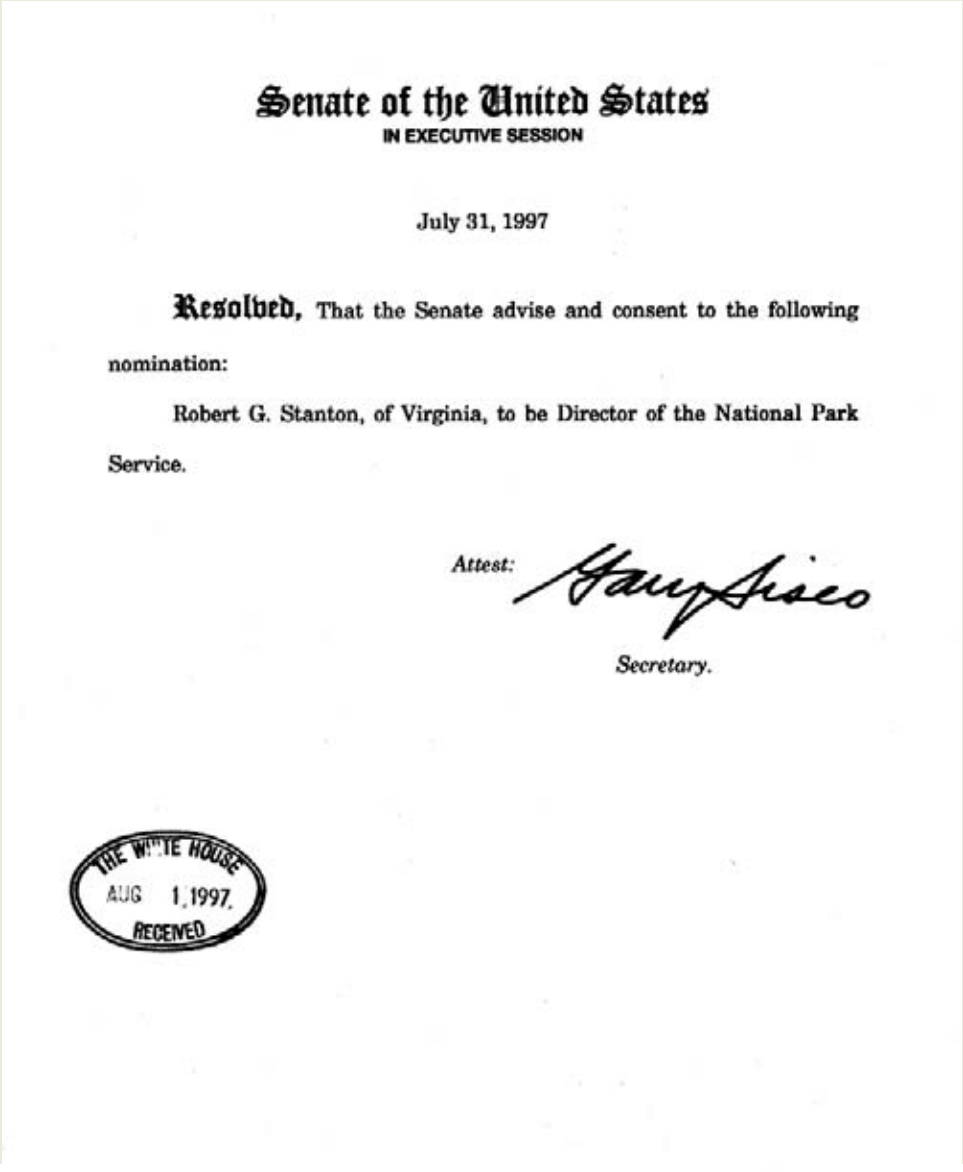
Shortly after I retired, the secretary said to me, "The president is going to formally consider you and nominate you." What had happened, in '96, Congress passed legislation requiring that the director for the very first time in the history of the Park Service be subject to Senate confirmation.[26] So it was not a unilateral decision that the secretary and the president could appoint me. The president said that he was interested in me being his nominee, and therefore, he made it known to his personnel folks at the White House and they proceeded to do the necessary paperwork, which means they had an intensive vetting process involving the FBI, the IRS, and everybody else.

So that was the delay. I think the president had made his decision to go with my nomination probably in February or March, which signaled the start of the vetting process. Once the president was satisfied with the reports from the FBI and the Internal Revenue Service and others, he officially submitted my name to the Senate.

What factors did you have to balance in your own mind in deciding whether you would accept this?

There was no balancing. I mean just the idea and the opportunity and the privilege of being considered was a great honor. And obviously going through the Senate confirmation process and being the first, there was no other former director with whom I could confer, and ask, "How do you manage this process?" But I must tell you that the secretary and his staff and the National Park Service staff were extremely helpful in preparing me for the Senate hearings.

But one of the things that I enjoyed, among many others, was interacting with Congress. And from the time that I served as the regional director and superintendent of the Virgin Islands and deputy regional director of the Southeast Region and two other positions in the Washington office, I had a lot of interaction with members of Congress. I had experience appearing before various committees. And then certainly having served eight years as the deputy for the National Capital Region and eight years as the regional director, I was daily involved in matters of interest to Congress. So I have had a lot of interaction with them.



Senate of the United States
IN EXECUTIVE SESSION

July 31, 1997

Resolved, That the Senate advise and consent to the following nomination:

Robert G. Stanton, of Virginia, to be Director of the National Park Service.

Attest: Gary Sisco

Secretary.

THE WHITE HOUSE
AUG 1, 1997
RECEIVED

And the White House.

And the White House. No question about that. So I looked forward to that process.

You mentioned in our first session that there were three senators who testified [on your behalf].

Two. There were several who had written letters, but there were two who appeared personally, who appeared jointly, Senator Paul Sarbanes (D-MD) and Senator John Warner (R-VA)... very distinguished members of the Senate and highly respected on both sides of the aisle. I had worked with them on a number of projects over the years. When I asked them to do this, they said, "Bob, absolutely no problem."

What in your personal and professional background do you feel best prepared you for the job as director of the National Park Service?

I think two things. One is the breadth of experiences I had working in the three principal levels of the National Park Service: in the parks, in regional offices, and in the national office. Prior to becoming a director I had served on three other occasions in the national office, so I

First Lady Hillary Clinton addresses guests at Director Stanton's public swearing in ceremony on August 15, 1997, in the Old Executive Office Building in Washington, D.C. Looking on are his wife and children, Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of Transportation Rodney E. Slater, and Senator Paul Sarbanes.

knew pretty much how the Washington office functioned. And I served as the deputy in two regions and the regional director, so it gave me a good sense just in terms of what constituted effective and efficient park operation from a park perspective, from a regional perspective, and from a national perspective.

But I guess what I realized early on, and I would trace it to my first experiences as a seasonal park ranger at Grand Teton National Park, was that the ultimate success of any program of the Park Service at the park, regional, or national level is in direct relationship to the interest, the commitment, the dedication, and the enthusiasm of the employees involved. Without the engagement of the employees, nothing is successful. And teamwork in those organizations, I think, is critical. And I think that based on the kinds of experience that I had at Grand Teton and other parks and other offices, I developed a very keen appreciation and awareness of what constituted effective teamwork and the importance of an employee being a part of a team and working with people. That's the bottom line, to be able to work with people.

How were you received by other senior Park Service people? Some other directors who came from outside the Park Service have indicated that they had a hard time being accepted. I just wondered how your experience compared.

Yes. I would not suggest that a person who comes from "outside" of the National Park Service cannot be an effective leader or be well received by the career staff. I do think there are some aspects of park management, park operations, that they would have to learn to understand and why programs are carried out the way they are. But I think by having served for a long period of time in the National Park Service, I was conversant with day-to-day park operations, regional responsibility, national responsibility, legislative mandates, the policies of the Park Service. And [I had] the ability to work with conservation organizations, business communities, and certainly other federal agencies as well as being able to represent the Park Service on the international stage. Certainly understanding the role of Congress in terms of oversight of Park Service operations, the appropriations process, how bills affecting the National Park Service or the park system are considered and approved or disapproved [is helpful]. So again, I think having three decades of experiences gave me a pretty good knowledge base in terms of what would be expected of a director.

Something peculiar about being within a major governmental position is that one's agenda, one's priorities, can always be influenced by circumstances beyond their control. I was sworn into office on August 4, along with three other bureau heads. It must have been

the second or third week in August that I joined Secretary Babbitt, Vice President Gore, Superintendent Mike Finley, and others in a major celebration of the 125th anniversary of Yellowstone, one of the first formal ceremonies in which I had had the opportunity to participate as director.

Shortly after I returned to the office, I got a call from the chairman of the House subcommittee on Interior appropriations, Rep. Ralph Regula (R-OH).[27]

A great fellow. I have the deepest admiration for him. I enjoyed working with him when he was the ranking minority on the subcommittee at the time. The late Rep. Sidney Yates (D-IL) was the chair. And he succeeded Mr. Yates when the Republican gained control of the House. There was a great deal of publicity about the cost of employee housing in Yosemite and Grand Canyon in particular, and the cost of a 700,000-dollar comfort facility in Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. And he said, "Bob, I want you and some of your managers to come up and visit with me. We're concerned about this. As a matter of fact, Bob, I think I'm going to have an oversight hearing on this," which he did.

And it was not a pleasant oversight hearing. They raised a lot of concerns about the Park Service planning, design, and construction program. Notwithstanding that these developments occurred on a prior director's watch, by becoming the director of the National Park Service that is a part of my portfolio, and I understand and appreciate that. That's what happens. As a result of the hearings, Mr. Regula and his committee arranged, well, directed that the Department of the Interior and the Park Service conduct an in-depth evaluation of the planning, design, and construction program. And to that end, the National Association of Public Administrators, a nonpartisan highly respected professional organization did the study and filed a report with Congress and with the administration. By and large as the director I concurred with the recommendations and we moved forward with implementing the recommendations. Some were easier to accomplish than others.

I think overall it strengthened our planning, design, and construction program. But, it was somewhat painful. And that [the hearing] consumed, absorbed, a lot of my time my first weeks and months in my tenure as the director. That obviously was not on my agenda in terms of what I had thought I was going to be doing and my priorities coming into the office. And invariably that happens to any person coming to an office. You work in a large arena. But I'll never forget that.

In the meantime, you're trying to organize your staff and ramp up for this new position.

That is correct.

Could you talk a little bit about how you organized your staff? Your deputy, Jacqueline Lowey, was appointed, is that correct?

Yes. Congress had passed a legislative measure requiring that the NPS appoint two deputy directors because of the growth and the increased responsibilities of the Park Service, not only in terms of administering the park system, but also in terms of its technical and financial assistance program related to state programs, historic preservation, land and water conservation, technical assistance to tribal governments, etc. Perhaps it would stand to reason that, again, for the director to discharge all of his or her responsibility, he may need another senior administrator to assist him. So Congress mandated there be two deputy directors for the Park Service.[28]

At the time that I was under consideration as a prospective nominee by the president, the Department of the Interior and the Park Service were moving forward and were looking at a candidate for this second deputy job. And I had the opportunity to meet with Jackie even though I had not been sworn in as the director. I think Jackie was with the Department of Transportation at that time. And she had my full support. And she was ultimately appointed as the deputy director. And then Deny Galvin moved from associate to the deputy position. Deny had been the deputy to the late William Penn Mott. So Deny was active for a number of months during his tenure in the Park Service as acting director in the transition of many directors. He was certainly a seasoned administrator and highly respected throughout the National Park Service. And obviously coming in as a former manager of a service center and a former associate director, Deny had a critical role in our moving forward with mandated changes in our planning, design, and construction program. But again, I must tell you, it consumed a lot of my time.

Who did you turn to routinely for advice and counsel? Was Deny Galvin one of those people?

Yes, Deny and the associate directors, regional directors and office heads. Of course, all of the regional directors had been my counterparts when I was a regional director. And there was some turnover in the regional directorships when I was there. Secretary Babbitt and I appointed Karen Wade for the Intermountain Region to succeed John Cook, appointed Robert Arnberger to succeed Bob Barbee in Alaska. Those were the two, because John Reynolds was at San Francisco, Jerry Belson in Atlanta, Marie Rust in Philadelphia, Bill Schenck in Midwest. They were the regional directors when I was a regional director, and they stayed regional directors when I was the director.

But at the time they were all people who had a lot of experience.

Yes, that's right. We were very, very comfortable with each other and I could rely heavily on all of them to give me sound counsel, good advice, and support.

NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM ADVISORY BOARD

How did you define your role as director and what vision did you bring to the office? What did you want to accomplish?

I think my philosophy on the stewardship responsibilities of the National Park Service was pretty much consistent with that set forth in the Vail Agenda and the goals of the Service's Strategic Plan, which I approved in 1999. I also wanted to have the benefit of some outside thinking, perhaps maybe on a different scale than what was employed with the development of the Vail Agenda and the Strategic Plan. And to that end I wanted to take full advantage of the congressionally authorized National Park System Advisory Board.

But I also wanted to have an advisory board that I thought would bring a high level of expertise and intellect and enthusiasm for the Park Service's mission. And I had a particular person in mind as the chair. He had served with distinction in a number of capacities in an advisory way. He had headed up President Clinton's Commission on Race. [He is] a very prominent historian. So I called on Dr. John Hope Franklin and said, "John, I need you. We need you." He said, "Bob, I'm just finishing my tour here from the White House Commission on Race and have got some other things to accomplish." I got on my knees and said, "John ..." And Secretary Babbitt concurred with Dr. Franklin's selection. Dr. Franklin said, "I'll give you one year." And then he was approved along with some other new members to the commission. I issued a charge to the board, and I must tell you Loran Fraser, head of Policy in the Park Service, was very instrumental in this. I give Loran a lot of credit for structuring the charge for the advisory board and their work. He and his staff did a yeoman's job.

To make a long story short, the charge was for the National Park System Advisory Board to just sort of pull back and take a look at what had evolved in our nation since the first national parks had been established [and] Congress had enacted the legislation establishing the Park Service. To make some judgment as to what the Park Service should focus on to better preserve the resources and serve the American people as well as the international visitors over the next several decades well into the 21st century. And they set about doing this work which produced an outstanding report called "Rethinking the National Parks for the 21st Century."[29] Because they had not finished their work prior to the change of

administration, I was invited to a press conference in which they unveiled their product. I've made use of several copies of it in terms of my own work with conservation organizations, youth organizations, etc. It's an excellent piece of work.

And I am pleased when I see some of the attention that the current administration, under the leadership of Director Fran Mainella,[30] has given some of the goals set forth in that study, "Rethinking the National Parks for the 21st Century." I was pleased with that. And I had often hoped that it would have been my lot to have had the benefit to use that report as a basis for setting my own agenda as the director of the Park Service, but that was not to be. But then again, there's the future.

I read through the minutes of the board meetings during your tenure, and the language of the report "Rethinking the National Parks for the 21st Century" was very carefully crafted and negotiated. I wondered if you could tell me a little bit more about the process of bringing the report to light. Were there any challenges in that? Of course, as you mentioned, by the time it finally was published your tenure had finished.

Yes, I don't know about some of the discussions between the advisory board and the current administration before they actually signed off on it, printed it, and distributed it, so there could have been some discussions. I just don't know.

NATURAL RESOURCE CHALLENGE

I guess part of my point was that it was very carefully crafted.

Yes. I think you're right. There are two things that I wanted to really put on the forefront as a director, well several [things], but some are traditional in the way of managing the Park Service. That is you want to ensure that you are attentive to resource preservation. I had the opportunity during my tenure to publicly commit the National Park Service to improve its performance with respect to, like Dr. [Richard] Sellars would say, "preserving nature in [national] parks." What happened in this instance, Dr. Sellars with the great support of then regional director John Cook and others, conducted a critical review of what the history of the Park Service had been in managing its national natural assets, which resulted, as you well know, in a book, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*. And that book was released when I was the director.

One or two things could have occurred. I could have gone into denial saying that, "Well we are doing the best we can," and just happily float on down the river. Or I could say that Dr. Sellars has identified some areas in which we should be giving more attention. Also I looked at this book, some of his findings, some of his conclusions, in the context of my experience during my career in the National Park Service. In many instances we have come a long way in preserving nature through better science, decision-making, and resource management capability. For instance, when I worked in Grand Teton, we did in fact have open dumps in the parks, so the bears would just forage off of all of this food. We spent millions of dollars combating the so-called pine beetle, an indigenous beetle, feeling that some things just should not take place. And fire by definition was bad. So in terms of ecological management, we have come many, many steps ahead.

So in a national leadership meeting that we had, I think, in South Florida, the Everglades, Dr. Sellars' book was high on my agenda. In fact, I think I even might have had Dr. Sellars at the meeting. And at that time I said we were going to take a look at managing natural resources in the parks. I appointed a team, Bob Barbee, John Reynolds, Mike Soukup,

Director Stanton meets with his senior staff in Grand Teton National Park in 1999.

and the others, and asked them to produce for my consideration over a fairly short period of time, I didn't want to call it an initiative. It was something else—an action plan for improving our natural resource program.

And so on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Mount Rainier [National Park], I had the opportunity to publicly announce that recommitment, that challenge, for the very first time. Interestingly, we had had some discussions with members of Congress before the challenge directive was signed off on and released. And it received tremendous bipartisan support. In that first year we received something between maybe fifteen to eighteen million dollars of new money to start moving ahead with the Natural Resource Challenge.

The other little tactic, approach, that I took was to have each of the members of the National Leadership Council[31] sign on the dotted line, not only the regional directors but the associate directors, saying that we as the leadership of the National Park Service are committed to this as a major agenda for the National Park Service.

Why did you feel it was important to have them do that?

I think it's good because anytime anything is introduced on a large scale someone is always going to question whether everybody is committed to this. Is this really where we are headed as the Service? So I didn't want anyone to have any second thoughts. This was where we were headed. Sign on the bottom line. You're either going to be with me on this or you're not. Obviously everybody was totally supportive of this. And I think it was a statement to the managers, and the regions, and the park that this [challenge] is something that the Service wants to do as represented by its leadership.

And the fact that there was money associated with it, too, although the money came a little bit later.

Right. Money always gets people's attention. They were certainly more favorable, you're right, because they didn't do a lot of shifting wondering where will we get the money for this? It's new money to move ahead.

Were there any particular aspects of natural resource management that you believed really needed priority attention? Dick Sellars laid out a number of problems in his book. I'm just asking if there were one or two that really jumped out at you?

One is obviously knowing what you're managing, the basic inventory of resources. But the other is knowing the organizational capacity of the Park Service and realizing that there had

been another major development that impacted the in-house capability of the Park Service to manage its natural resources. I'm not quite sure of the sequencing of when this occurred, but shortly after Secretary Babbitt came into office there was some consideration about where the scientists should be [located], whether they should be under control of operational entities or be housed somewhat independently, and therefore, not operating under the possibility that they could be "mismanaged," I suppose is one way to say it. Another would be to say "coerced."

[The decision was made] that they be totally independent and very objective. And therefore, there was created the National Biological Service, which pulled all of the researchers from, well, maybe a few remained, but basically all of the researchers from the Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, BLM [Bureau of Land Management] and housed them in this new organization. And then that met with some disdain by Congress and others. To make a long story short, the secretary eventually came up with an independent office, a major function within the U.S. Geological Survey. So a lot of the former Park Service biological researchers are now in that organization. Some are still duty stationed in parks, but organizationally, administratively, they're part of the U.S. Geological Survey. So that was one area where I'm sure there was some discussion by my staff as to whether or not we should make a run to regain that in-house capability. I don't know whether it resides there today.[32]

The other [priority was] having more trained resource managers. It's one thing to have scientific information in terms of what to do with a certain species or not to do with a certain species, but the other is having the ability to act upon that scientific knowledge. So the plan speaks to a greater resource management capability, not researching, but managing the resources.

Another was to increase the collaboration with other land management agencies, as well as academia. And I don't [recall] whether or not the Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit[33] was a forerunner to the Natural Resource Challenge, but they're very compatible. And this really speaks about heavily engaging universities and colleges in pursuit of knowledge in parks, and inviting others to join with the Park Service in addressing it. I give a lot of credit to Dr. Soukup and Dr. Gary Machlis. They did a yeoman's job with the CESU program, the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies [Unit].

And the system has continued to grow.

Oh, yes, it has, right. A lot of the universities want to become a part of that network. But Dr. Soukup has kept me apprised through the annual reports that the National Resource Challenge continues to receive tremendous bipartisan support. But in austere budget times everything else competes with it.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

There was a similar effort to launch a Cultural Resource Challenge that stalled early on. And I wondered if you had any thoughts on why that effort was less successful.

I actually fault myself on this one. I became extremely pleased with the commitment of the Service to the Natural Resource Challenge, the tremendous bipartisan support in terms of appropriations, [and] the engagement of academia and others who wanted to contribute toward preserving nature. I said that obviously there had to be a similar type of opportunity here for the cultural resources. Certainly from the tremendously rewarding experience that I had in working with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and with regard to the Save America's Treasures office in the White House, and [working] personally with Mrs. Clinton, [I concluded] that there was just a tremendous interest at all levels of the government and among the grassroots community about preserving these treasures.

So I charged Associate Director for Cultural Resources Kate Stevenson and her staff to take the lead, as was the case with Dr. Soukup, to develop a call for a Cultural Resource Challenge, and it was developed. And, because time was running out, it was a resource challenge that I approved. It does not bear the signatures of all of the regional directors and associates. I think I approved it in the last month that I was in office in December of 2000. It's an excellent piece of work by Kate and Pat Tiller, Dwight Pitcaithley, Randy Biallis, and others. But for some reason the letter, as well as the spirit of it, simply has not been picked up by my successor for whatever reason. I don't hear much about the Cultural Resource Challenge.

Given your long career with the Park Service, I just wondered if you would talk about how much attention the Park Service traditionally and currently gives natural resources and recreation, as opposed to attention devoted to cultural resources. Do you have any general thoughts on that?

In Dr. Sellars' book he makes reference to it. I think there have been eras, periods, in the Park Service's history in which [there was] the need to develop facilities to accommodate visitors, to attract more public interest and perhaps support, so there was a lot of emphasis in certain periods in which we built visitor centers, new roads, etc. But I think there's always been a commitment to preserve the resources for which the parks were established. It could be from the structures at Mesa Verde, to the Arch at Jefferson [National] Expansion Memorial in St. Louis.

There is such a competing demand for how are you going to allocate the operating resources, may they be dollars, materials, supplies, or personnel to carry out certain functions. And obviously if you have a park in which you have visitors, the safety of the visitor has to be paramount, and certainly their enjoyment. But I don't think the Park Service consciously provides those visitor services at the detriment of the resources. We try to do both. We try to do both, and sometimes we're successful and sometimes we're not.

The process is more fluid right now?

It's more fluid. And what's not fully realized and perhaps fully appreciated is the scope of the National Park Service responsibilities and the resources entrusted to its care. I mean, if you just take a look at the number of historic properties as an example, it's absolutely mind-boggling. And many of these are complex structures so they require a great deal of day-to-day maintenance as well as rehabilitation. I mean you take a place like Ellis Island, or the Statue of Liberty, or the Jefferson Expansion Memorial, or the monuments in the nation's capital, preserving the integrity of Civil War, Revolutionary War, or War of 1812 sites. There are many military forts from Fort Jefferson in Dry Tortugas to Fort Davis in my home state of Texas. They require a great deal of capital outlay to preserve them.

Did you have any specific objectives in regard to cultural resource management, things that you wanted to accomplish during your tenure in that area, other than just simply ensuring that they were preserved and properly maintained?

First, I certainly wanted to see them preserved and maintained at the highest standard possible. But [we needed to] couple that with the significance of these areas in contributing to our understanding of the circumstances that governed the growth of our nation, the diversity of people who contributed to the growth of our nation. So I was an advocate for preserving and providing for more public understanding and appreciation of the richness of our diverse cultural heritage, but also I was interested in telling the full story by bringing in new areas within the park system. That is a philosophy that some people adhere to and some don't. So I was pleased to see a number of areas come into the system during my tenure that spoke to...

The list of some of the units that did come in during your tenure just confirms what you said. It's really a very telling list: Tuskegee [Airmen] National Historic Site, Central High School, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller and the Conservation Study Institute, Minuteman Missile Site.

We often teased Bill Schenck, who was a regional director. "Now, Bill, I trust that that [missile] has been deactivated. Don't turn a missile this way in case you're not satisfied with your budget." I'm trying to remember, because I worked with Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, I think the Sand Creek Massacre site was authorized to make a little...

Do any of these new units really stand out as having special significance for you?

Yes. That is Little Rock Central High School, because the Little Rock Nine were my contemporaries. I was in the next-door state, Texas, and looking at my contemporaries being escorted to school by the soldiers[34] approved by President Eisenhower in 1957, but I remember it as if it were yesterday. So I was delighted to see that story told, especially given my own experiences related to the "separate but equal" doctrine. But also Ernie Green, the first [African American] to graduate from there, is a member of the board of trustees for the African American Experience, part of the National Park Foundation.

And certainly the rich legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen.[35] It is almost unthinkable that as a nation we could fight our wars, but still felt we needed to be segregated because of our race. I mean, gosh, how much in the dark ages were we as a nation and as a people? It was dumb.

Did Manzanar [National Historic Site] come in during your tenure, too?

No, Manzanar had come in earlier, but I was heavily involved in getting the construction money for the visitor center that they dedicated not too long ago. And then I was very pleased to be at *Brown v. Board* [*of Education* National Historic Site] for the 50th anniversary commemoration. I think you may have mentioned that.

During my tenure as the director we argued successfully for funding for the preservation and new exhibits at the site, but I really had the backing of Congress to have the school ready for the 50th anniversary. Just to give you a little chronology on the funding for *Brown v. Board*—when I was director we were successful in getting, I think, a little over

eight million dollars appropriated for the rehabilitation of the school, and the exhibits, and probably about a 300,000-dollar increase for the operation. And then another million or so, maybe two million dollars were appropriated during the current administration, but it was a great, great program.

The list [of new units] is a powerful statement of the Park Service assuming the role of telling painful history and reflecting painful history, educating the American people on painful history.

Yes, it is. The Park Service has for years included painful chapters, going back to the Revolutionary War or Civil War. But I don't think we have been as forthright telling the story to our multicultural citizenry as we perhaps should, but it is an educational process.

We've spoken earlier about the *Discovery 2000* conference, and as you may recall, Dr. John Hope Franklin was one of the keynote speakers. And I made frequent reference to the remarks that he gave there. In fact, I have a copy of his speech. But his expression was that places that tell sad history are not places in which we are to wallow in our remorse, but rather be moved to a resolve to become better citizens. And that says it all. These are to be learning places and you learn from some difficult experiences.

Well, this is the time of "Holding the High Ground"[36] and changes in the way the Park Service interpreted Civil War history. Would you want to talk about that?

Yes, two things going on—internally I had a number of park employees who said, "We should deal with the whole context of the Civil War. We should deal with the whole issue of slavery in the context of the Civil War and be forthright about it." Concurrently with that, young congressman Jessie Jackson, Jr., who apparently is a student of the Civil War, visited a number the areas and he was not satisfied that a single one had the complete story of the Civil War and that there was the whole matter of slavery. So he introduced legislation that was enacted requiring the Park Service to conduct a study of how it has in fact presented the story of the Civil War in the large number of Civil War areas that it administers.

That study was filed with Congress. I would have to applaud a number of the superintendents who really have done a yeoman's job and are doing a yeoman's job highlighting the role of African Americans in the Civil War. Because when I was growing up in Texas and reading about the Civil War you never read that there were [African American Union soldiers], the Massachusetts 54th Infantry as an example. And of course, Congress had passed legislation authorizing the District [of Columbia] government to construct on

parkland a memorial to the over 200,000 African Americans who fought with the Union forces in the Civil War. So that [legislation] brought this omission home very prominently.

But there are some who would argue that the only responsibility of the Park Service is to talk about the fact that there was a Civil War, that there were Union and Confederate soldiers lost, and that there were certain battle tactics employed by either force. It should not get into the social and economic issues that had an influence. But I would say to any person who has the view that we should not talk about slavery as a cause of the Civil War—simply go to the Lincoln Memorial and look up on one of the walls and read Lincoln's second inaugural address, one of the best inaugural addresses ever given. Lincoln said that somehow we all knew that the war was influenced by slavery; I don't remember the exact words. But, yes.[37]

So have you been at all surprised by the vehement response by certain communities to this change in interpretation? The secretary of the Interior received hundreds of postcards and letters of complaint.

It's not a big surprise. I'm a native son of the South, so I know about human nature. The National Park Service experienced some demonstrations in Topeka, Kansas, people who were calling the 1954 decision the worst thing that the Supreme Court could have done since they said the segregation of schools was unconstitutional. But philosophically I have to hold to the notion that the counter to all of that [bias] is education. And maybe there are some who are not as educable.

That's right. You've got to try though, right? You've got to try.

Yes, you've got to try. That's right. I like that. You've got to try.

EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

To move on and talk about education and interpretation for a minute—what new initiatives did you advance to promote education and interpretive programs?

I have to give a lot of credit to [NPS Chief of Interpretation] Corky Mayo. He had a workshop that was held here in Northern Virginia. It came out with the program "Connecting People to Parks." That was one. The other was, and the concept of the program itself was launched by Director Jim Ridenour though it could also predate him, called "Parks as Classrooms." And so all of those aspects were a part of my support of education. I think every element of the Park Service program coming from the Natural Resource Challenge had an educational

component, and obviously the Cultural Resource Challenge, which was never really fully launched, had an educational component.

And then the opportunity to employ young people in the parks, I think that probably was the most direct way of providing a stronger educational opportunity. Obviously a youngster coming into the park for a day's experience and listening to the ranger interpreting, that's a part of the educational [function]. But if a youngster is coming in to spend six to eight weeks actually in the park working with the career people doing some conservation work, I think that's a real essence of education, and therefore, I was a strong, strong advocate of that. One initiative is that Congress had for years authorized the Park Service to spend no less than a million dollars from its appropriations for the YCC program, Youth Conservation Corps. And during my tenure we upped the ante on that.

The other is [the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993], legislation signed by President Clinton, and it called for the establishment of the Public Lands Corps to be administered both by the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture. And this was to develop agreements between the federal government and nongovernmental organizations that would leverage federal money and private money to provide for young people to preserve the natural and cultural resources on public lands. It could be BLM, Park Service, or Forest Service. But the legislation didn't appropriate money. It gave you the authorization to do this.

So I said, "Hey, this is something I like." And I knew the secretary was for it, too. So I said, "Where can I get the money to really launch this program?" What money did I really control so that I could launch it? The fee [demonstration] money, because under the recreational fee program, as you know, 20 percent comes under the director's discretion to allocate it toward other National Park Service resource preservation needs. So I said that first year we're going to inaugurate this program here in the National Capital Region. Secretary Babbitt and I formally launched it on the C&O Canal, and I allocated one million dollars from the fee program. At the time I left office, I had upped the ante to six million dollars. And that was leveraged with other organizations, the Student Conservation Association and many other youth organizations in the nation, to match federal funding on a 50/50 basis. It was just a tremendous program and had a large, a significant percentage of diverse youngsters participating for the first time in conservation programs. It's my understanding that because of other pressing demands funding has been reduced, but that was a truly educational program.

Another thing that started during your tenure was actually making curriculum available on the Internet to incorporate Park Service resources.

That's right. That's great. And the other one, in terms of getting the youth involved, was launched in late 1998. And I have to give Toni Lee credit. She launched the highly successful

and much needed Cultural Resource Diversity Intern program. Yes, and that's doing great. I think those of us who are in position of authority and responsibility in these public land national agencies have an obligation to contribute toward preparing the future stewards. We won't be around forever, so to the extent that we can invest in these new stewards early on, we're preparing the new workforce. But over and above that, if early on people develop an environmental ethic and an appreciation of their natural and cultural heritage, they will take that with them as they become a member of the Senate, become a president of a bank, or a grocer down at the corner store, or a carpenter. They will still have that environmental ethic. So it strengthens the whole movement as I would see it.

Do you believe the Park Service has had an education mission ever since 1916?

Oh, yes, it has. As a matter of fact, if you take a look at the history, at one time what we now call "interpretation" was called "education." And of course one of the pillars, I suppose, is Freeman Tilden.[38] In his book *Interpreting Our Heritage* he says that whether we call it education or not, that's what it is.

What more do you think the Park Service could be doing to educate the American people about their natural and cultural heritage? Do you have any thoughts on that?

There's just so much to be done in this area. Obviously I think the Park Service began to use today's technology to communicate with the young people. Time and attention, everybody is competing for their time and their attention. So what can the Park Service do to excite the imagination of the young people? Internet technology is the one way of doing it....No question about that. It's my understanding, though you might have a better feel for this than I do, that there are some efforts underway now to have the next National Park System Advisory Board meet to take a real look at what the Park Service should be doing in the educational arena.

And all of the issues we've been talking about are related to funding. And I want to quote you here. This was your first message to Park Service employees after becoming director. You indicated that a major challenge facing the Park Service was to secure greater financial resources and that your top priority was "to vigorously improve funding for the Park Service operations and programs." So was funding a priority?

No question about that. We made some gains, but this is something obviously that Director Mainella is confronted with now: the operational or the base programs of the Park Service are critical. And sometimes you just don't get the necessary funding to meet some of the

day-to-day operational needs. But I would like to think that sufficient resources could be made available to meet the basic day-to-day operation as well as critical land acquisition needs, capital improvement needs, assistance to states and their political subdivisions, and tribal governments. I'd like to think that we should be able to meet all of our critical requirements.

One of the things that I find most interesting when I talk with members of the public and others, they say, "I just don't understand why Congress doesn't give the Park Service the money that it needs." And it's difficult to tell them the process, because I think in some instances Congress really is falsely accused. As an example, in the budgetary process the president has so many dollars that he is going to ask for in terms of so-called discretionary dollars.

When the president decides what he's going to do with his discretionary budget, he's got every agency head standing in line saying, "I need more of these discretionary dollars." So once OMB says, "The president for the next fiscal year is going to ask Congress to appropriate X number of billion dollars. Mr. Secretary of the Interior, your fair share of this is X number of trillion dollars. How you allocate it among your bureaus is your business." So what the secretary will do is go ahead and make some preliminary decisions that he or she will give the Park Service X number of dollars, Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management, Indian Affairs, Surface Mining. So the Park Service each year receives what they call a planning allowance, and therefore, you have to construct your budget within the context of that allowance. Most of the time you'll ask for a bit more over the allowance, and you need to negotiate with the secretary.

To make a long story short, when the president approves the Interior budget for a given fiscal year, when the Park Service goes before the appropriations committee, it has to support the president's request. The president may say, "You're going to ask for 2.4 or 2.5 billion dollars for this fiscal year." So the American public thinks that whatever the Park Service needs the Congress should respond to it, but that's not the way the system works.

It seems to me that if the public goes into a park, as long as it's open and things still sort of look okay then they don't see the need.

That's right.

It's hard to dramatize that [need].

Yes, it is. Occasionally the subcommittee for appropriations and the authorizing committee conduct field visits to get a little better feel and I hosted some of those when I was

superintendent. They're very beneficial. Of course, Congress always gets criticized for going to parks on a trip. Some people say it's a boondoggle, but I think it serves a really useful purpose.

Well, you were successful to a degree because the budget grew between fiscal year 1997 and fiscal year 2001. There was a significant increase for day-to-day operations and natural resource management, which I guess brings us back to the Natural Resource Challenge.

That's right. But in addition to that, obviously the Park Service benefits from assistance from a number or other sources. There was a tremendous response to Save America's Treasures,[39] as an example. I recall, and I mentioned this earlier, Marie Rust [regional director for Northeast Region], the superintendent of Thomas Edison [National Historic Site], and I joined in hosting Mrs. Clinton and Jack Welsh [CEO] of General Electric on a Save America's Treasures tour. Jack contributed five million dollars from General Electric for the preservation of Thomas Edison's laboratory and library. So there were millions of dollars that came to us from that. And of course, the National Park Foundation through its programs, provided financial, technical, or in-kind services assistance.

One of the most gratifying areas in which the American people support the park is through the individual volunteers. I think when I left office we had about 115,000 to 120,000 individual volunteers.

Through the Volunteer In Parks program?

Right, the Volunteer In Parks program.

And you mentioned Save America's Treasures. There was also Vanishing Treasures.

Vanishing Treasures was initiated by Director Kennedy. And that program, if I remember correctly, focused principally on the adobe structures in the Southwest, because they were vanishing.

It was related to finding and training craftsmen...

That's right. In fact, there was a major program preparing the craftsmen to have that certain kind of skill. Everybody just can't go in and repair an adobe structure that may be 2,000 to 3,000 years old. I hope that's continuing. It was a great, great program. I applaud Director Kennedy on that. I just don't know where that stands.

PARTNERSHIPS

Well, I guess another vehicle for dealing with budget constraints is partnerships and the growing emphasis that the Park Service is placing on partnerships. Would you just give me your definition of partnership?

Well, a partnership [is a relationship] in which two or more parties have interests that could be served by the same program or project, coupled with an understanding that each party has a responsibility to work cooperatively with the other partner and to contribute to the success of the program. Some organizations that have an interest in partnering with the Park Service felt that the Park Service always wanted to have the 51 percent share of the partnership.

And that to a modest degree this has to be true. Ultimately if it is a partnership project or program that's going to occur on the Park Service's jurisdiction, if it's a successful program or it's a program that goes sour, there is only one entity that is going to ultimately be held responsible and that's the Park Service. So what you need to do going into a partnership is to understand what the liabilities are and that someone in the end has to be liable for the project.

But sometimes the Park Service is under some legislative or legal constraint and what happens invariably is that sometimes the Park Service apparently is not as clear as it should be. They want to go ahead and get into the partnership and then try to work out the difficulties later on, and sometimes it's too late to do that. And sometimes you need to just walk away from a proposal. You may want to present something to me and I say, "Yes, I'm willing to enter into this, but these are the conditions to which I am bound." You say, "Fine, Bob, I just won't handle this," and walk away. But sometimes they don't do it, you see. They sell each other a bill of goods, but then it goes sour.

...communicating well with each other and respecting each other's position.

Yes, that's it. Mutual understanding is critical to any partnership.

So tell me some of the reasons why partnerships are important to the Park Service, other than the obvious financial one?

My philosophy is that to the extent that you can engage more individuals and organizations in caring for their natural and cultural resources, it helps. Obviously it has an educational benefit, plus it gives people an opportunity to contribute for a deserving [resource], which

is really theirs. The other one is, it's pragmatic. If you were to take a look at the breadth of the responsibility of the Park Service and the resources for which it's responsible, there is no way that 20,000-plus employees or its concessionaires or cooperating associations can do a good job in managing that tremendous inventory of resources. So you need to invite people to come in to help you do that. I mean that just makes sense.

If you were to take a look at the legislation establishing Yellowstone National Park, it envisioned that there would be partners, there would be others working in the national park. It states specifically that the secretary of the Interior could enter into a lease agreement with the private sector to develop hotels. So from day one it was envisioned that there would be some others working in the parks under some type of letter of agreement or license or contract doing business for the American public.

Yes, especially as the system continues to grow.

That's right. But there are some institutional biases or constraints that required the training of employees to work cooperatively and effectively with concessionaires, cooperating associations, and other partners. There are some employees who are more entrepreneurial and who want to engage more folks in partnerships.

How did you go about building a constituency outside the Park Service? In a general sense, how did you go about promoting these partnerships?

One is that you have to be accessible. Most of the superintendents I worked with knew this and even the regional staff. You have to be engaged yourself. You have to get out and meet new people over the weekends, at night, what have you. Unfortunately in the parks there are still some nine-to-five folks. I never did embrace that philosophy.

If you really want to do your business, you've got to stretch your time. But you've got to be accessible and you've got to be able to meet people on their own turf and try to work on understanding and rapport. And I just think that development of constituency groups or relationships with constituency groups is critically important. And really the constituency groups are also the ones who say, "I don't like what you're doing. I'm going to see you in court." But at least they can get in touch with you and you'll be in touch with them. My executive secretary, Ms. Cathy Nichols, was invaluable in managing my rather hectic and demanding schedule. She was excellent!

PART

THREE

JULY 20, 2004
FAIRFAX STATION, VIRGINIA

PARTNERSHIPS (CONTINUED)

When we left off, you defined partnership for me and talked in a general sense of the way that the Park Service views partnerships. But I wondered if you would like to talk a little more specifically about some partnership initiatives, like the American Battlefield Protection Program, or the Federal Lands to Parks, and also Heritage Partnerships, which I know are important to you.

Partnerships, I think, are critical to the National Park Service in carrying out its mission for the preservation of natural and cultural heritage resources as well as providing for educational and recreational uses. And if you want to take a look at the legislation establishing Yellowstone National Park, it in a way speaks to partnership because it talks about the secretary permitting the private sector under certain conditions to develop visitor-use facilities in parks. That, in essence, constituted partnership, albeit a contractual type of arrangement. But it has always been envisioned, I think, that in administering parks there should be opportunities for individuals, the private sector, and public-spirited organizations to join with their National Park Service in preserving these resources.

So this has pretty much evolved into an umbrella expression called partnerships. And as I said before, it could constitute a number of different kinds of arrangements. Partnerships could be described as the Volunteer in Parks Program which now involves probably over 100,000 individual citizens who give of their own personal services in furthering the program of the Park Service. So that's a personal partnership. The other is the concessions program—probably in the neighborhood of 300 concessionaires, small operation, large operation—which provides a tremendous [number of] visitor services under contractual arrangement with the Park Service. That is another form of partnership.

The Park Service has a number of cooperative agreements with nonprofit organizations that have actual operations in parks. For instance, I am a member of the board of directors of Eastern National [Association], which is one of the larger cooperating associations in the Park Service. Eastern National manages no less than 300 bookstores throughout the National Park System, operating in four of the seven regions. Again, a partnership, albeit under a cooperative agreement.

Then you have the partnerships that are authorized by a specific act of Congress. You can talk about the Park Service administering the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Historic Preservation Fund where the Park Service, in partnership with states and tribal governments, provides financial and technical assistance to those organizational levels that carry out programs, another form of partnership. Then you mentioned earlier about

the Civil War Battlefields Protection in which the Park Service provides grants to nonprofit organizations to assist in identifying, as well as preserving, national battlefield sites that may not be under the jurisdiction of the Park Service, but nevertheless they have a national significance.

The National Heritage Areas Program perhaps is one of the more encompassing partnership programs. It is a way in which Congress authorizes the establishment of National Heritage Areas that does not convey the jurisdiction of additional lands or cultural and natural resources to the care of the National Park Service. But it recognizes that those areas have significance and benefit to the American people. Therefore by authorizing it, it says that the Park Service will in fact enter into a partnership with local leaders, local civic organizations, and local conservation organizations, and local government in caring for these heritage areas that are important to the American people. But the Park Service also brings to the partnership technical and financial assistance, which is often matched by local resources. So that is a great partnership that has been formalized, if you will, in terms of a legislative mandate. It has been proven to be one of the more successful hallmarks of the partnership of the Park Service.

Congress designated seventeen National Heritage Areas during your tenure. Would you talk a little bit more about why that's important and why this program is important?

Yes. I think it's understandable that to just continue to expand the National Park System to have the sole responsibility for preserving our natural and cultural heritage has many limitations. So, therefore, in recognizing that there is a role that the government can play in assisting communities and other governments at the state and local level in caring for heritage resources, it does two things. One, it gives other individuals and organizations the opportunity to really actively contribute toward the preservation of the resources. Plus it gives the government an opportunity to be a partner with the grassroots community. So I think it's a win-win proposition for all involved, because the American people, I think, really have a caring for their heritage and for their surroundings, for their neighborhoods and communities. So the government brings to the table technical assistance and in some instances financial assistance and matches that with the resources and the level of interest at the community level.

Getting more support from the community that way is an additional incentive. It's about more than saving Park Service financial resources.

It's more than that, yes. The common goal is to save those heritage resources that are important to us and save them for the benefit of future generations.

Did you see any change in the role or the nature of partnerships during your tenure?

I sense that the [partnership] concept is expanding in that there are more individuals, more organizations, who want to be a part of this partnership arena. I believe there's more support by Congress in fostering partnerships in some of the newer parks and in the Park Service and in providing some financial resources to facilitate these partnerships. So I think partnerships are ongoing, certainly with the leadership of the current director, Fran Mainella, who is a strong advocate of partnerships. So you have again another dimension.

I was heavily involved in working with then First Lady Hillary Clinton, now Senator Clinton, in Save America's Treasures. And that was just a fantastic partnership program in that Congress would appropriate X number of dollars in furthering projects identified in Save America's Treasures but with the proviso that the congressional appropriation would be matched by non-appropriated money, therefore, creating a partnership. So that has been absolutely fantastic and that program continues today.

INTERNATIONAL PARK MOVEMENT

To broaden the definition of partnership even further—you were heavily involved in the international park movement. Would you talk about how that came about?

Yes, that's correct. My first major introduction to international park affairs was in 1972 while serving as superintendent of Virgin Islands National Park. I was very fortunate, very privileged, to be selected by the director of the Park Service at that time, George B. Hartzog, Jr., to be a delegate and speaker at the Second World Parks Congress. The conference was hosted by Yellowstone and Grand Teton on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the establishment of Yellowstone. And that gave me a great opportunity to interact with my counterparts from many other countries, small countries, large countries, to get a sense that there is a common interest in preserving natural and cultural resources across international boundaries. And it

gave me a great sensitivity to the role that the National Park Service has played over the many years in contributing its expertise, if you will, to other countries in developing their national parks or equivalent protected areas or preserves.

Certainly it can be said with a great deal of humility that the United States was the first country to establish a national park, the concept of a national park. And today more than perhaps a hundred sovereign nations have established similar national parks somewhat patterned after the purpose of the legislation that governs the Yellowstone National Park. And I would dare say that the United States has been called upon, either directly or through the State Department, to assist many other countries in establishing their national parks. So the National Park Service has been involved on the international stage for many, many years. And from my perspective I think that is a role that the National Park Service should fully embrace and it should continue.

And while I was the director of the National Park Service, IUCN [International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources], the World Conservation Union headquartered in Gland, Switzerland, which is the organization that has coordinated each of the World Parks Congress, had launched their planning for the Fifth World Parks Congress. I had the opportunity of hosting along with IUCN a planning meeting of 28 national park directors from various countries throughout the world. It was an absolutely fantastic meeting.

Where was that meeting?

It was held here in Virginia at the Arlie House in Northern Virginia. And we had representatives from many countries, including South Africa, Australia, Canada, Russia, Spain, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia. It was absolutely just a fantastic meeting. So at that point we launched the planning for the Fifth World Parks Congress. When I stepped down as the director of the Park Service I was asked by IUCN to serve as an ambassador for the World Parks Congress and my responsibility in that role was to visit with various conservation organizations, the private sector, the foundations, and universities, and others, and raise an awareness about the importance of the World Parks Congress, but also to invite them to enter into a partnership with IUCN in terms of in-kind services and financial support.

To make a long story short, the congress was to be held in 2002 to coincide with the ten-year cycle. The First World Parks Congress was held in Seattle in 1962, and they wanted to hold it every ten years. But South Africa, which had been designated some years ago as the host country for the Fifth World Parks Congress, hosted two other major summits or

conferences in the year 2002. One was the International Conference on Sustainability that was held in Johannesburg [South Africa] that involved 30,000 to 40,000 delegates. So the South African government said maybe we will just push the World Parks Congress out for a year and so it was held in September 2003. And IUCN and all of the park leaders were very pleased that IUCN had asked and they agreed to a serve as our co-patrons for the World Parks Congress. Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan and the former president of South Africa Nelson Mandela both gave opening remarks for the opening ceremony. It was absolutely poetry in motion. It was a great congress. About 3,000 delegates representing 160 sovereign nations attended over a two-week period. It was fantastic.

It sounds like a very memorable experience. What did you carry away from there?

Well, it reinforced one of my passions, as you well know. The theme of the World Parks Congress was "Benefit Beyond Boundaries" in that the value of parks and protected areas have a benefit certainly to the human spirit, as well as some economic and environmental concerns beyond just the mere boundaries of that park. The educational aspect as well, the research, the enhancement of knowledge about our history, our natural resources, so there are many benefits than just what's inside the boundaries.

President Nelson Mandela in his opening remarks talked about the importance of parks and other protected areas to the alleviation of poverty in that there are many companies and others who have really established outstanding businesses deriving from parks, particularly ecotourism as an example. But oftentimes, unfortunately, it's the locals who are not a part of that economic benefit, and therefore, there should be a linkage between whatever economic spin-off there is from preserving all of these great resources to those who can benefit from it, particularly some of the indigenous people.

But the other major theme that he stressed, the overarching theme, was youth. He stated that the future belongs to our youth, and if we do not involve our youth in conservation management, we will not succeed in our efforts to save nature or humanity. That's the bottom line.

That it's not enough to just care for the resources, you need to make sure you're grooming...

...the future stewards, that's right. The other side of that, you wake up one day, and well, who's going to take care of this now? Yes, it was great.

I understand you also made a trip to China.

Yes, that's right. There are a number of international agreements in which the United States government is partner. I led an official delegation to China where we signed for the very first time a memorandum of understanding between their counterpart organization, which is called the National Park Agency, located in their Ministry of Construction, and the National Park Service.

They were extremely gracious. We had an excellent tour of many of their parks and their cultural resources. And we talked about cultural resources. I guess the only thing that's sort of like it in terms of longevity may be some of the pre-Columbian American Indian structures compared to some of their cultural resources. It's an old country with a lot of historic resources. But they have adopted certain preservation techniques that evolved over many, many centuries that certainly we could apply in terms of how best to care for 2,000-to-3,000-year-old stone or masonry structures that were absolutely fantastic.

And, of course, China will be the host for the Olympics in 2008. And I think that will give them the opportunity to be put on the international stage the richness of their natural and cultural resources. They like most other countries are taking pride that they now have a national park service, which they call the National Park Agency, that cares for the resources.

Organizationally, they differ from us in that many of their natural areas, national areas, are not necessarily administered by their central government but by their provincial governments. And I think that's similar to the case in Australia where they have a strong provincial government and some areas may be directly administered by the central government. They still may be called a national park, but they're administered by the provincial government, whereas a national park here is not administered by the state of Texas or Florida but by the federal government.

With these experiences interacting with representatives from other countries I'd be interested to know whether one of the things you discovered is that we have more in common than you anticipated in terms of the problems [we face] in preserving these places?

It's almost uncanny. There is such a commonality of the kinds of issues and concerns from country to country. Just from a resource preservation standpoint, we talked about the invasive species, for example. If I were to fly today and sit in at the meeting of the head of the parks of South Africa or the head of the parks of Australia, I'd just close my eyes and think I'm sitting with some of my own regional directors or superintendents talking about the same resource preservation and visitor-use issues.

The whole question about public involvement in the planning process, relationship to local communities, indigenous people, diversity in their staffs, the delivery of a program, the common global issue or set of issues are what we see the parks addressing. There always is a shortage of funding. That is a recurring issue as well.

Do you feel optimistic? What future do you see for the international park community?

Well, I guess I'm a little bit concerned at least by what I've read. And I have not had a chance nor have I sought really the opportunity to discuss it with anyone in the Park Service or the Interior. But what I read, particularly in terms of some of the congressional hearings, there doesn't seem to be a strong interest at this time in furthering Park Service involvement in international park conservation affairs. It could be just a little blip on the screen. I'm not quite sure, but there could be a philosophical shift as well. I just think there are so many other benefits to our international diplomacy objectives of exporting our expertise, our experiences in managing the resources that could be a benefit to a developing country or to an industrialized country. It's a way to express goodwill and to impart something of great benefit.

Were there specific things that you wanted to accomplish in that area? I mean it sounds like, going back to Hartzog's tenure, you'd been interested in the international park movement. But when you became director were there specific things...I noticed that you signed agreements with both Canada and Mexico during your term.

Correct. In fact, I did not have an official tour to Mexico. I did have an official tour to Canada. As a matter of fact, we had an overarching agreement with Canada, but then Tom Lee, who at that time was my counterpart for Parks Canada, has since retired, great fellow. He and I signed an agreement that we would share experiences of managing resources. They have an immigration program that's somewhat parallel to our immigration program as evidenced at Ellis Island. There were a large number of immigrants who came through an island in Canada. And they're upgrading their program, doing an inventory of those who came through and putting it on a website or computer base or whatever is central to them, like what was done at Ellis Island. We signed an agreement to share experiences, two parallel stories from different countries in terms of how they processed immigrants when there was a major influx of immigrants back in the '20s and '30s.

But certainly in terms of neighborly relationships, I think there's so much that can be done between our northern neighbor and our southern neighbor, with Mexico and Canada. We have common boundaries with a number of parks.

International parks.

Glacier.[40] Right. And also a park in Alaska.[41] So I just think that in terms of sharing of experiences in managing heritage resources, it's a great way to develop positive international relations. Yes.

This next area could sort of fit into the partnership vein, too. I'd like to talk about environmental initiatives and environmental partners. To start, if you would describe your relationship as director with groups such as the National Parks Conservation Association [NPCA], the Sierra Club, the Wilderness Society, in general terms.

Yes. I think the key to any relationship is to understand the objectives and the role each of these organizations is pursuing. I realized that my role as director of the Park Service is pretty clear with respect to the legislative mandate for managing the National Park System and the Park Service program and understanding my administrative responsibility as the chief executive in terms of budget and personnel, policy, procurement, contracting, all of that.

And then to understand that the National Parks Conservation Association, Wilderness Society, they have a certain role that they want to play in society and the relationship to the government, because they are non government. They are nonprofit. So I respect their role. For instance, the National Park Conservation Association is a strong advocate for the protection of the parks. That's their whole reason for being. They were established three years after the Park Service was established. And it was our first director who advocated that there should be such a private organization that would sort of keep an eye on the federal government. So they play a strong advocacy role, advocating to Congress, to the public and others that the Park Service should be doing thus and so. And also they're an advocate to the Park Service itself. The ultimate weapon, if I can use that term, that any nonprofit organization or for-profit organization or an individual can play, the strongest advocate role is to say simply this: "I'll see you in court."

And the National Parks Conservation Association has in fact sued the National Park Service with respect to how it has carried out or not carried out its responsibilities as they have seen them. I viewed that as a positive thing, because that's their role and I respect

their role. I might certainly object to the merits of what they're proposing, but that's the role that they play.

And concurrently with that, there are a number of partnership programs that have thrived. For instance, when I was the director we entered into a partnership with the National Parks Conservation Association with respect to developing business plans. And on the basis of that partnership, the Parks Conservation Association was able to secure funding from private foundations that would provide the financial resources required to employ MBA students to come into the parks to work with the superintendents, their administrative officers, and develop a business plan. So it was a very positive partnership with the NPCA that's an ongoing relationship. It was ongoing. I understand it's been terminated now, because of whatever between the Park Service and the NPCA. But there was a positive program ongoing and then maybe down the hallway we might be arguing or fighting or proceeding to go to court.

The Park Service was working closely with the Wilderness Society. The Park Service has not done, we have not done all we should have done in terms of preserving the wilderness within the park system in accordance with the Wilderness Act of 1964.

Were there times, though, when they also gave you support?

Oh, no question about that. These organizations are a very strong advocate and a very positive one because their underlying objective was to preserve these resources. But again, they reserve the right to take exception to how the government was in fact caring for the resources.

Did any of these organizations seem to be more supportive of Park Service goals and objectives than the others?

I felt that I got along quite well and got the support of all of the organizations, at different levels obviously. And then a lot of times we would argue and I would take exception to what they were requesting of the Park Service. And sometimes they would be demanding of the Park Service. But I have a lot of respect for these various organizations.

Since leaving the directorship of the Park Service I've been involved with the Natural Resources Council of America. In fact, I'm currently a consultant to the Natural Resources Council of America, which is the umbrella organization of 85 or 86 of these mainline organizations, such as NPCA, the Wilderness Society, Student Conservation Association, Trust for Public Lands, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and the many organizations that I worked with when I was the director. So I would think if I did not have a rapport, or

respect for them, and vice versa, they certainly would not have engaged me to continue to work with them on a number of issues.

It sounds like you're describing an effort to establish and maintain relationships rooted in mutual respect. Is that a fair characterization?

Mutual respect and a mutual objective, but with each reserving the right to differ vehemently on things that they oppose.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

What were some of your priorities in the environmental arena? Just give me a sense of what your concerns were and what your initiatives were in that area.

Well, there are two driving considerations in that the Organic Act of the Park Service as well as the Organic Act of the individual parks coupled with the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Historic Preservation Act. [They] all called to the attention of the Park Service that the preservation of these resources that constitute our natural and cultural environment is an ongoing obligation of the Park Service. I mean the law is clear as to what we're trying to achieve in terms of enhancing the quality of our water and our air.

So it comes down to two considerations on the part of any responsible agency, maybe the Park Service, Fish and Wildlife, Forest Service, whether or not you have the organizational capacity which might equate to personnel, money, supplies, material, etc. And one of the considerations of capacity is your policies and your priorities. The other one, which really will dictate any level of success, is whether or not you have the will to try to do something about it. I mean, if you have millions of dollars and still don't have the will to do anything with the millions of dollars, then it's all for nothing.

So what we tried to do was to cover both of those considerations, to make sure that our policies, our priorities, our strategic plan, the director's orders, special memorandums that I may have signed or issued, really spoke to our commitment to doing the best we could about the environment. And also to petition the secretary or the Congress to get a few more dollars. But more importantly to try to instill a sense of urgency, a sense of a philosophical embracing on the part of the employees of the Park Service to be the best environmental stewards they can be. So we tried to cover both of those.

As an example we adopted a number of measures in terms of making sure that we were using biodegradable products or to the extent that we could use natural gas as opposed to other fuel sources. In other words, trying to make sure internally we were as "green" or as environmentally sound as could be. But I think with the initiation of the Natural Resource Challenge, which I often reflect on as one of the highlights of my tenure, that that really brought to the forefront that yes, we can in fact recommit ourselves to being better stewards. And we were able to do that in such a fashion that there was tremendous almost instant support by the secretary, by the president's office, and by Congress, in a bipartisan way. I think in the first year of inaugurating the Natural Resource Challenge, we received a substantial increase in our budget of new dollars, I think in the neighborhood of about fifteen million dollars to further the Natural Resource Challenge. And it had many elements, many dimensions to it and has proven to be, I think, quite a success. I'm pleased that this administration has adopted the Natural Resource Challenge and continues to support it.

And, of course, there were some just major park specific environmental issues, Everglades restoration, the dams at Olympic National Park, snowmobiles in Yellowstone,

Director Stanton (back row) joins a group of young people for the inauguration of the Public Lands Conservation Program.

and Grand Teton, wild fire management, removal of underground fuel storage tanks, and removal of trailers from parks.

Elwha River?

Elwha Dam, right. Great Smoky, right. Goats in Olympic National Park. Hogs in the Great Smoky [Mountains] National Park. But also in the Great Smoky, we, I don't know who was the personal advocate of this. It may have been...probably Karen Wade when she was superintendent of Great Smoky. But in any event, someone presented the idea of a taxonomy program, which in essence would inventory every living species possible in Great Smoky Park. And that program is continuing and it involves a lot of students, a lot of university professors, private citizens to come in to look under leaves, logs, and what have you, to inventory anything they could see crawling or growing. And they have in fact identified some insects that heretofore have never been detected or categorized. They've been trying to get a feel of every living organism in that park. It's just a tremendous undertaking, but it's exciting.

And these initiatives, did you feel that the Park Service was in sync for want of a better expression with the department? I mean it seems like the Park Service was during your tenure was also operating in a supportive environment.

No question about that.

With Secretary Babbitt.

Yes. There was one term that Secretary Babbitt used frequently. As a matter of fact, it's a theme of a publication that was produced near the end of his eight-year term as the secretary, because he did serve a full term. I can only recall two secretaries during my career who served for a full eight-year term, both from Arizona, Babbitt and Udall. Udall came under Kennedy and Johnson.

It was a beautiful publication that highlighted many of the achievements of the Interior during that eight-year period under Secretary Babbitt's leadership, the overall achievements, and then they broke it down by individual bureaus and offices. But the theme of his legacy if you will was "ecological restoration." So we talk about the Everglades, we talk about the removal of the dams in the Olympic National Park, restoring the natural environment, taking out some of the man-made...

I'm not sure if it was the Park Service directly or just the department interacting or working directly with the Departments of Energy and Transportation for things like the "green" parks or the shuttles in Zion [National Park], the rail system.

Yes, that was a beautiful program. Of course, the secretary of the Department of Transportation is one of my heroes, Rodney Slater. But yes, we entered into a major agreement that was signed by Secretary Slater and Secretary Babbitt that spoke to the partnership between those two departments in furthering alternative visitor transportation services in Zion, Yosemite, Grand Canyon, and Acadia. So today we do have in place, the Park Service has in place three....Yes, some [visitor transportation services] came on line. Deputy Director Lowey did a fantastic job directing our transportation program and our cooperative efforts with the Department of Transportation.

And the light rail at Grand Canyon.

Yes, that's right, which has certainly been fraught with some ups and downs. Congress has taken certain exceptions to what we propose. I don't know where that stands now.

DIVERSITY

Well, I want to spend a little more time on the issue of diversity in the Park Service and in the National Park System. We talked briefly about the diversity internship program, but there were some other major initiatives that I'd like you to talk about. Back in 1984 you gave an address, actually spoke very eloquently, at the First World Conference on Cultural Parks about just that subject.

Diversity.

Right, diversity.

One other action that I took that was fully supported by the secretary, and we may have touched on this in my second interview, and remind me if we did, with respect to the charge I gave the National Park System Advisory Board under Dr. John Hope Franklin. That sort of reinforces a number of things we discussed, you know, the partnership, and stewards, and the educational role, but it also speaks to the point you just raised about the importance of diversity.

But we haven't talked about the diversity action plan.

That's right, yes. Diversity could be used in a very narrow sense or in somewhat of a broader sense. And sometimes people equate diversity to an obligation of making sure that there is equal opportunity for employment and that there is no discrimination in the workplace. By law those two things are to be addressed. But diversity encompasses a broader set of circumstances. I think you also have to look at whether or not your services and programs are available to the broader spectrum of the American public possibly to ensure that a community that may have a predominantly Hispanic resident population is [served] by the park and its program.

We can certainly meet the basic requirements for equal opportunity and nondiscrimination in the workplace by having equal employment opportunity policy and other kinds of action. But we expanded upon that to include it as having a diversity plan that certainly spoke to employment in the workplace and nondiscrimination in the workplace, but it also spoke about engaging with diverse communities and making sure that the services of the Park Service were available to the larger spectrum. And undergirding some of those objectives was [an effort] to increase our involvement with young people not only in terms of seasonal employment but participation of the young people in the Youth Conservation Corps. And Secretary Babbitt and I inaugurated what we called the Public Lands Corps Program. And all of those, while they are not focused on minorities or women per se, we had an overall obligation to make sure that these opportunities were available again to the larger community.

So I think there were a number of programs that we initiated that sort of widened the circle of American people engaged actively with the National Park Service. We entered into some cooperative agreements with historically black colleges and universities. For instance, we launched the Urban Recreation Research Program at Southern University in Baton Rouge, which I understand has sort of fallen by the wayside at the level that we had envisioned. But there were just enormous efforts to move along those lines.

Also I had a desire to create more of a sensitivity on the part of the leadership of the Park Service about the larger community, because some had sort of lived in isolated circumstances. So we had a major workshop with all of my regional directors and associate directors, and we had it dealing solely on diversity which was a facilitated workshop and we met at an Indian school in Kansas. The name will come back to me.

Would that be Haskell?[42]

Haskell. We had a great meeting there and a chance to interact with American Indian leadership. And subsequently in order to reinforce this sensitivity to the history of our country with respect to the Jim Crow law, discrimination, segregation, what have you, I had a regional directors' meeting, we called it a national leadership meeting, to coincide with the observance of the 35th anniversary of the Selma-to-Montgomery March. And so following the meeting we participated in the reenactment of the march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge.[43] I guess about 20,000 to 30,000 people walked across the bridge led by Coretta Scott King, Congressman John Lewis, about twenty to thirty members of his fellow members of Congress, Rodney Slater, the late Hosea William, and President Clinton. It was poetry in motion. Two regional directors later told me that it was one of the best experiences they ever had in their Park Service careers to really truly understand what has taken place in our country. So we were able to get a lot of things accomplished to reenergize our commitment to diversity.

It seems like during your tenure there was a real effort to take a look at how history is interpreted in the parks and how to make parks more relevant to a diverse population. Is that true?

No question about that. I suppose that my personal experiences growing up in segregated Texas, segregated public schools, and then coming into the federal government in the '60s when there still was not a full attention to the history of this nation and diversity within the workforces of our federal government. So I knew growing up as a youngster that the popular media, in particular the newspapers and magazines, were devoid of the full story of America. And the textbooks did not, they might just make a little reference to it, but not really [give] full disclosure of our entire history.

And then when I came into the Park Service, when I first worked as a seasonal ranger in '62 in Teton, there had been two areas established in the park system that spoke specifically of African Americans and one had been authorized. The two that were already in the system when I joined the Park Service were Booker T. Washington and George S. Carver [national monuments]. But Congress had authorized in 1959 the National Council of Negro Women to construct a memorial to Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune and that was not actually accomplished until 1974. But it so happened that in the same year that I first worked as a

seasonal in Grand Teton in '62, President Kennedy signed into law legislation establishing the Frederick Douglass Home as a [national] historic site.

Today there are seventeen areas in the park system plus the Underground Railroad, in addition to two national memorials, the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial and the memorial to the 200,000 African Americans who fought with the Union in the Civil War. But the Congress has also authorized a memorial to Benjamin Banneker, to Martin Luther King, Jr., and the 5,000 African American patriots who fought with George Washington in the Revolutionary War. Those three memorials have not been constructed here in Washington.

So that gave me a lot of pride. But certainly if you take a look at our history with respect to Japanese Americans, Chinese Americans, American Indians, or natives of Hawaii and Alaska, our history is fraught with a lot of difficult periods. Manzanar [National Historic Site]. And the Congress recently authorized a new park that speaks to Japanese American internment.

Minidoka.[44]

Yes. I worked with Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell on the Sand Creek massacre site in Colorado. I was fortunate during my tenure as the director that Sand Creek Massacre entered the system, [as well as] Little Rock Central High School, [and] Tuskegee Airmen. I was very proud to join with Secretary Slater and others in the Oval Office when President Clinton signed the Underground Railroad legislation.[45]

Then [there was] the whole question about African Americans in the Civil War: What influence did slavery have on our going to war? And Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr., was a very strong proponent of broadening our story at the Civil War sites. In fact, Congress directed that we conduct a study [of interpretation at Civil War battlefield sites], which was done and was filed with Congress. But the Park Service folks, on their own initiative, have already looked at the role of African Americans in a specific battle, either the enslaved or someone wearing the Union uniform or Confederate, whatever the case might be. So it's a rich story. It should be told.

So what are the benefits of a multi-racial, multi-ethnic park experience or park interpretation? Talk about how that benefits the American people. What impact does it have on the future viability of the Park Service?

Well, one is philosophical and the other is...

Practical.

You're right, yes. I mean that's the bottom line. The point is, Dr. McDonnell, that you're an American. And when you say you're an American, that means that you are an American and this is your history. And in order to appreciate what it means when we say, "I'm an American," I need to understand the full dimensions of my history. And it should make me a stronger person. Being a stronger person I can attribute it to a stronger "we the people." That's sort of philosophical.

But you're right. On the practical side people vote for or against whatever they believe in. The management of the park system is accomplished through the political process. The Park Service relies on its appropriations. The appropriations are voted on by whom? By the people sent to the Congress. So if you send people to Congress who don't understand and appreciate what the parks are about then they sure are not going to vote in favor. They're representing a growing constituency of African Americans and Hispanics. If you're not relevant to their constituency, why should they vote for you? So that's the practical side of it.

RELATIONSHIP WITH CONGRESS

Which leads me into the next area—and that's to look at the relationship with Congress. Could you generally describe your relationship with Congress, and how important was that relationship to your effectiveness as director?

Again one, I think, has to understand, appreciate, and respect the role of Congress. It's sort of trite to go back to, but there are three branches of our government. Each has a distinct role that it plays in carrying out the government function of our country. Congress's role especially is threefold. One is to legislate, that is to authorize. Another is to appropriate funds to support those authorizations, and the third is to perform federal oversight. So if I give you an authorization and I give you some money, I think I have the right to come in and see what you're doing with it. And so Congress does it through GAO or through congressional oversight hearings.

I respected those roles and knowing that in the end members of Congress are elected either by their state or by their individual district and have an obligation to be responsive to that state or that district. And I understood and appreciated that. But I also understood that they hear from other constituencies; they hear from other groups who might have a different view about the importance of parks vis à vis other kinds of government activities.

But I think that having worked for a number of years in the National Capital Region as a superintendent, a deputy regional director, and a regional director, I had the opportunity to interact with the members of Congress on a daily basis. So I had an opportunity to really get to know many of the leaders on a one-on-one basis.

I always enjoyed my relationship in a bipartisan way with the members of Congress. And I've enjoyed the opportunity to testify before the various committees. And sometimes they were very contentious, particularly if there's a difference in the leadership, party leadership, say, in the House and the White House, the House of Representatives and the White House. For instance if the Democrats were in charge of the House and I'm working in a Republican administration and I present a Republican budget, the House may take exception to that. So that's part of the give and take, and I enjoyed and respect that [interaction].

But again, as I say with humility, that I think I always had a good relationship in a bipartisan way with the leadership of Congress. Obviously there were instances of differences of opinion about things that should be done. But I enjoyed working with members of Congress, and I have maintained a relationship with some since I left office.

Were there some other members who were particularly effective champions of park-related issues? Do any other members stand out?

Yes, right. On the appropriations side I just cannot give due praise. I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude to the support of the late Sidney R. Yates (D-IL) who chaired the subcommittee on Appropriations. The ranking minority member was Congressman Ralph Regula of Ohio. When the Republicans assumed majority leadership in the House Ralph Regula became the committee chair. And Ralph was just a premier supporter of the national parks, and he and I remain friends even to this day. The ranking minority on the subcommittee during Ralph's chairmanship was Norm Dicks (D-WA). Norm is a longtime supporter and good friend. Another supporter and friend serving on this committee was Jim Moran (D-VA). They and other committee members were great champions of the national parks and the National Park Service.

In the Senate, Senator Craig Thomas, who chaired the subcommittee on parks, was a strong supporter, from Wyoming. He and I differed on a number of issues, particularly snowmobiles and how we were proposing to manage bison in Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks. Senator [Jeff] Bingaman from New Mexico, Senator [Daniel K.] Akaka (D-HI), Senator [Dale] Bumpers (D-AR), Senator Bob Graham (D-FL), Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA). There were so many.

Congressman John Lewis worked with us on Bethune, Martin Luther King, Selma-to-Montgomery. Congressman James Clyburn (D-SC). Congressman Steny Hoyer (D-MD). Steny was just a great supporter, still a great supporter. As a matter of fact, Accokeek Foundation, of which I'm on the board of directors, will be saluting Steny in a major program in October. I could go on and on and on with the members of Congress.

Were there any legislative achievements that you were particularly proud of during your tenure?

Yes. Nine parks were established during my tenure. Twenty-plus areas were authorized for study. I think probably in the neighborhood of thirty areas received congressionally authorized boundary adjustment. As I pointed out earlier, the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom was authorized. They had the reauthorization of the Federal Lands Highway Program which doubled from 80 million dollars to 160 million dollars the Park Service received annually for road and bridge repair. Reauthorization of the Historic Preservation Act. Authorization of the National Park Omnibus Improvement Act of 1998. That was a comprehensive piece of legislation. Secretary Babbitt and I worked very closely with Senator Craig Thomas on it. He was the principal author of that legislation and probably the most sweeping and controversial part of it dealt with concessions reform. It's still evolving, I suspect, to some degree. That was a major piece of legislation. So there were a number of legislative accomplishments.

Apparently it was the first legislative reform of concessions in a generation.

Yes, that's right.

Granted it takes time to see the full impact, but do you have any initial sense of its impact?

Yes, it brings into play some new requirements that I think make the contracting more competitive, more open if you will, as opposed to giving preferential rights to a renewal of an existing concessionaire. I think it will, over a period of time, it will serve the American public well, and obviously the Park Service. But once there was an understanding, if you've been a concessionaire and have been operating satisfactorily for a number of years that you should get preferential rights. But there may be someone else who could fill a little higher measure of quality so it should be competitive. It does not say that you haven't done a good job and you cannot compete, it's just that we're going to have other people compete as well.

But there's also a financial benefit to the Park Service from this new legislation. It authorizes that 100 percent of the franchise fee paid by concessionaires be retained by the National Park Service.

On the other side were there some legislation achievements that eluded you, things that you would have liked to have accomplished up on Capitol Hill that you weren't able to accomplish?

I had hoped that two areas would come into the system when I was the director. One is coming into the system or will come into the system. The legislation has been signed into law by President Bush. That is the Carter G. Woodson Home here in Washington.[46] And the other one, a study is being conducted as we sit. It's on Harriet Tubman. But I'm trying to recall whether or not, I don't think we were ever successful in getting through OMB, a proposal to give some permanency to the fee legislation. Congress, I think, is still debating, but it will also need to be approved as the permanent ongoing measures, important legislation that will govern the collection of entrance fees, campground fees in the various parks.

One of the contentious elements of the fee legislation is that under the current law, any park that has a fee program by law retains 80 percent. So you do, in essence, have parks such as Grand Canyon that collect more entrance fees, more dollars in fees than they have in its annual appropriations. I think the Grand Canyon collects probably around fifteen to eighteen million dollars from fees. So if you were to permit that kind of arrangement to continue indefinitely, Grand Canyon would have more money than it needs or could spend in a reasonable way. So Congress is looking at ways to sort of balance that all out.

It was during your tenure, in 1998, that Congress amended the earlier General Authorities Act to change the way new studies were done.[47] Do you want to talk about that a little bit?

Yes. There obviously was a concern, and understandably so, about the growth of the park system and whether or not there are areas that have come into the system that do not meet national standards. So Congress imposed some very stringent requirements. One is that the Park Service could not unilaterally, through its own resources or its own devices, study potential areas. It could do a reconnaissance type of study that would not require the expenditure of more than $25,000. But in order for the Park Service to do an official suitability, feasibility, or what they call a special resource study, it had to get specific authorization from Congress, then submit this study to Congress. The study would delineate whether or not the

area, first of all, measured up to national significance standards, and if so, whether or not some other entity could manage the area, a state or nonprofit, or whether or not it warrants perpetual involvement, financially and otherwise, by the federal government, i.e. a unit of the park system.

So it is a very lengthy process to produce a report before Congress even gets around to consider adding the area to the system. However, there is absolutely nothing in the legislation that precludes Congress from saying, "Hey, you know, we like this area. We want the Park Service to draft legislation. We will consider it, and if we like it we will enact it and the president will sign it into law, study or no study." So Congress can always do that.

I have no problem with the process. I think it's a sound process. And that what is happening now with Carter G. Woodson. That's what's happened with Mary McLeod Bethune. The Park Service is also doing a study on the Gullah culture in South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia, a special resource study. So it is a long drawn-out process. But I think that it gets the public and public agencies, Park Service professionals, to really take a look at the merits of this proposal and to determine whether or not it could be preserved by some other entity, and if not, conclude that it warrants entering the park system.

Do you believe that the Park Service criteria and procedures for adding new areas to the system are adequate? I am getting at this whole idea of "thinning of the blood," expressed by one of your predecessors, former Director Ridenour. I just wondered how you felt about that.

I think through this serious process that ultimately if the American people, through their elected representatives, determine that this [site] is something worthy of preservation, I have no problem in taking a great deal of pride when the arrowhead is put up at the entrance gate. Now certainly we can weigh in from a personal perspective, professional or personal, as to whether or not the Custis-Lee Mansion needs to be preserved in the system, or the Frederick Douglass Home. You know you can take your own philosophical, political bent on an area. I know Steamtown [National Historic Site] frequently came up. But through the process all of the pros and cons can be weighed. And once it is declared by Congress, signed into law by the president, that this is a unit of the park system, then the Park Service has every obligation to make sure that it does its very best by that park.

I often tell people that it's interesting in that there are two things that the Park Service is not authorized to do. The Park Service is not authorized to create a new park. Nor is it authorized to, what is the expression, to "de-establish" a park. Even if you're with the

Park Service your whole career and believe this area should not be a part of the park system, that's not your prerogative.

There will always be a debate. I have not read this per se, but when Horace Albright in the '30s was advocating that the National Park System should be expanded to include these Civil War and these Revolutionary War sites, I understand that some Park Service professionals were not thrilled with this idea. "What is this?" they said, when President [Franklin] Roosevelt signed the Reorganization Act in 1933 and brought a lot of the Civil War sites into the area, the parks and memorials in the District, which were not administered by the Park Service until 1933, into the park system. So was that "thinning of the blood"?

And of course—something happened in the Nixon Administration. Congress was proposing the establishment of Gateway and Golden Gate [national recreation areas]. And I think in the end the administration went along with it, pretty much saying that we needed to restrict [recreation] areas to those two. But in addition to Golden Gate and Gateway, today you've got Cuyahoga, Santa Monica, and Chattahoochee.

Although an interesting thing happened with Cuyahoga Valley, a national recreation area. I got a call from Congressman Regula, "Bob, you've got a new national park." Well, we'll just change the name. It's now Cuyahoga [Valley] National Park. He wrote it right into the appropriation: Cuyahoga National Recreation Area will heretofore be known at Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Overnight. I love that.

It sounds like you're just placing a lot of confidence in the American people.

I think that the process gives everybody [the opportunity] to make their interests known and their concerns. The other process, which is a continuing debate, is the president's use of his authority provided in the Antiquities Act[48] to designate national monuments. I think there's a lot of controversy particularly on the part of the lay community that when the president uses that authority it's taking private lands and making national monuments. But by definition under the Antiquities Act they're carved out of the existing federal domain. What it does is maybe to give it a high level of a preservation mandate, but it does not take any private property off of anybody's tax roll.

There was quite bit of controversy during your tenure because of the large number of national monuments that President Clinton established and the [size of those] areas.

[We] asked the question, "Is there no faith in the Park Service?" But, you see, what I concluded on that: if the president were to designate a national monument out of land

that's administered by BLM and transfer that [land] to the Park Service, at the time that he does that, the Park Service's Organic Act and policies kick in. And as an example, the Park Service policies dictate that hunting will not be permitted in any park area unless specifically authorized by Congress.

Whereas at the time, some interpreted Clinton's decision as a lack of confidence in the Park Service.

In the Park Service's mind, yes, right. But we must understand that he needed a little bit of wiggle room there. By retaining some of the new national monuments under BLM jurisdiction, agency policy would permit continued traditional recreation uses such as hunting.

DISCOVERY 2000

We're going to shift gears here and talk about *Discovery 2000*. How did the idea for the conference originate?

There were discussions about how should we sort of reenergize, probably a bad way to express it, but give a little bit more focus to some of the recommendations that were set forth in the Vail Agenda and the Strategic Plan. And then, as we thought about it, that is not necessarily to diminish any of the excellent recommendations of the Vail Agenda, but to bring some of those recommendations and some of the thought processes that went into the recommendations into a broader form and new era if you will ...a little bit farther into the new century. And I give a lot of credit to Loran Fraser, who heads up the Policy Office for the Park Service, and to Jerry Rogers, who really looked at a way in which we could structure a conference or a major workshop that would sort of build on our past, analyze the present, and project where we think we want to go or should be going over the next few years. Concurrently with that I charged the National Park System Advisory Board to move forward with their thinking and [assess] where the Park Service has been, where it is, and where it should be going. And so it evolved after that discussion.

And then we said, "Well, we need to maybe do something on a larger scale than what we were doing with the Vail Agenda, to involve more of our partners, our friends, our allies, our foes, our critics, and what have you, as a part of this deliberation." And then we should also involve former leadership of the Park Service, former regional directors, superintendents, and personally invite all of the former directors to take an active role in that. And every last one of them accepted the invitation. Every last one of them was there. Director Hartzog was not traveling at the time, but he came to us via a very passionate video presentation. So that

was the mission. And then [we had] some world-renowned spokespersons to really get the juices going. Dr. E.O. Wilson, Dr. John Hope Franklin, Maya Angelou, all just did a fantastic job of setting the stage to get the proper processes in gear.

We also considered whether or not we should come out of *Discovery 2000* with a document that people could embrace and maybe sort of use it as a guide or recipe or as a crutch or whatever the occasion may be. And then we toyed with [the idea] that maybe what we really want is to get into the head of each person, their heart, and just have them digest the conference proceedings themselves and be reenergized and recommitted to the mission of the NPS, sort of a far-flung idea. I said, "What the hell, I'll just buy into this. Let's do it that way." So it was great. It was great.

I think that, there was a lot of testimony, just in terms of what people gathered individually and how they were recharged and what they wanted to do when they returned to their respective parks, offices, and communities. But I think there was also a decision made to have some type of follow-up within a couple of years, three years. I don't think that ever happened. But still today people reflect on *Discovery 2000* as a great experience in terms of how they have focused their thinking and maybe reengineered their own career pursuits, or what have you. I think overall it was worth it.

Then more recently Director Mainella has had a partnership conference in Los Angeles. I had the opportunity to participate in that. The focus there was to continue to strengthen the whole partnership arena with the public, with private organizations as well as with other federal, local, and state governments.

In your keynote address you indicated that you wanted the conference to be a "safe place to think out loud."

That's right.

And you wanted it to be forward looking and visionary. Looking back, it was quite a contrast from the traditional superintendents' meetings.

Yes, that's right. We wanted the conference to touch each individual because it's the individual who's going to make a difference. I mean there are some things you can do organizationally, or in a structured fashion, some sort of bureaucratic approach, which is sort of the traditional way of doing things. Here we wanted to touch the hearts and minds of the conference participants.

To some extent was it a better reflection of the Park Service today than a traditional superintendent's conference? By that I mean there were quite a few women there. There were cultural resource people in addition to natural resource people.

Yes, that's right.

Is that something you were conscious of in the planning?

Yes, the selection of attendees and topics was by design in that we wanted to have the topics as well as the participants themselves reflect America and reflect the rich natural and cultural diversity of the park system. And what we wanted to achieve in the organization itself. And I think we tried to set that stage.

Did the conference meet your expectations, exceed your expectations, or fall short of your expectations?

Fully met my expectations. The only problem was I wanted to defy physics. I wanted to be so many different places at the same time. There were a lot of workshop discussions I wanted to attend. It certainly met my expectations. It was great.

CONCLUSION

[It is often said] that with the Park Service's dual mandate to preserve these resources, preserve the parks but also provide for public enjoyment, there's an inherent contradiction. And I wondered if you believe that's true. Are the two inherently contradictory?

I don't think they're inherently contradictory. It's that dual obligation that I found most attractive. That was most attractive to me in pursuing a career with the National Park Service. It's inconceivable to me that based on the kinds of skills that people have today, the methodology of conducting all kinds of resource management, with some of today's technology that you cannot manage resources in such a manner that people could not use them, and provide for both, preserve it and to use it. It would be very, very easy if you just had an obligation to go with one as opposed to the other, to just accommodate hordes and hordes and hordes of people and just give secondary treatment to the resources. Or to just drop people out [in favor of] of the resources....But the challenge is how you can do both and yet achieve both in such a highly satisfactory way.

I often have thought about writing my own interpretation of the Organic Act. Yes, some have done that. The late Dr. Robin Winks, whom I was with at Yale[49], had written on it and others have written on it. I'm going to write on that. But it's not inherently contradictory. It's two objectives that are compatible and are achievable if there's effective and efficient management of those two objectives.

It's inherently challenging.

Yes. No question about that. It's challenging and it's easier said than done.

What do you think are the greatest challenges facing the Park Service today?

One of its major objectives is set forth in the Organic Act of the Park Service which really is not that well known, probably because it is an expression that is not commonly defined by this administration, prior administrations, and maybe future administrations, this Congress, prior Congresses, and future Congresses. "The Service thus established shall promote." When you talk with Park Service people, you do not hear them talk a great deal about an obligation to promote the national parks. It's not marketing parks necessarily. It's not advertising parks necessarily, but it's conveying, I think, to every segment of our society the significance of these parks and what they contribute to our efforts to seek a more perfect union. And the only way we're going to get that way is [if] we can understand the richness of our heritage. So, therefore, we have an obligation to promote these parks.

The challenge is to what extent can we carry out programs and activities and conduct ourselves as stewards so that people can embrace the importance and significance of the areas. And therefore, when they have an understanding and appreciation of the parks, they will want to join in the army of stewards to care for these resources just by their own personal conduct at home, in the communities, and in the parks. I mean that's going to be the ultimate savior of the national parks—citizens' caring.

The other consideration is a practical one. It is to have a corresponding increase in capacity to care for the increase in responsibilities of the park system and programs of the Park Service. But what's so interesting about the debate on the budget and often you hear that Congress never gives the Park Service enough money or you say that the administration doesn't. The question has always been on my mind, to what extent should every American citizen understand the federal budget and appropriations process? Because when the president's budget goes up for Park Service, then that budget goes up in the context of his

having to consider the allocation of the annual federal discretionary budget for all other domestic programs.

So I don't know whether the average citizen understands when you ask for X number of billion dollars for the Park Service, they actually look at it in the context of what are the needs for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, or Fish and Wildlife, or the Forest Service? So there has to be a lot of trade-offs. And so I think there might be a need to sort of reexamine the budgetary process and also how the American people are in tune with what the budgetary process is. I think there will continue to be emphasis on partnerships and other sources of funding, the fee [demonstration] program as an example, to augment or to supplement the direct federal appropriation.

So I think two things. One, it is to create a greater awareness and appreciation by the American people about their park system whereby they would want to contribute more themselves. Secondly, it's to continue to examine the best way to insure their sustainable financing of the Park Service to carry out its mandate. I'm not necessarily advocating that there should be a tremendous hike in entrance fees, or that there should be a 100 percent increase in appropriations in lieu of entrance fees. But I think there should be a continuing reexamination of how best to assure that the next five years, ten years, twenty years there are going to be some sustainable measures to assure a flow of money to care for the parks. We have sort of a yo-yo process now.

The other is the challenge to continue to work outside of the Park Service organization, outside of park boundaries—with local communities, other governmental agencies, the private sector—in contributing toward the quality of air, the quality of water, because there's no way that any park is going to be immune to the environment in which it exists. These external influences will always exist and we have to be a party to that, to engage in dialogue, engage in action plans to mediate, to mitigate some of the adverse impacts on parks. So we've just got to step outside the box and deal with some of those issues. And that extends also into the international, because our foul air has no respect for the Canadian border or Mexican border and vice versa. We need to be conversant with that and to work cooperatively across international boundaries.

But you also can get into some specific type of issues that are going to be major challenges. Invasive species is a global issue. And with the ease of global travel I can pick up a seed of an indigenous plant in Australia and the next day when I come home it's planted here and if it agrees with the soil content, I just introduced an invasive species. So people are traveling all over and just importing their environment. It's an international problem.

Maybe this relates to some of what you've been just been describing, but in what areas did the Park Service fall short of its full potential?

One is that I don't think it adequately promotes the value of the parks. The other is the most important resource that it has is people. More resources need to be invested in the development of employees, training, career growth, and more use of the modern business approaches, business technology. I think organizationally a lot needs to be done in terms of improved administrative management and that requires an investment of money and time to allow people to sharpen their skills.

I'd be interested to know what you see as your greatest accomplishment as director? What gives you the most satisfaction?

I think I was able to instill in the employees [the conviction] that we could get the job done. That everyone felt good about working for the Park Service and willing to do the best job that they could. The other was to introduce the Natural Resource Challenge, which I think was a demonstration that if we make our needs known and are able to express ourselves professionally that we will get the kind of support we need.

The other was to carry out a major reform of how we conduct our planning, design, and construction, albeit with a lot of encouragement by Congress. We nevertheless carried out some major improvements. I was able to work effectively with the administration and with Congress in getting new authorities that would strengthen the management of the park system through the programs of the Park Service as well as new sources of revenue, such as the concession franchise fees, the reauthorization of the fee demonstration program And I think the overall relationship with Congress in a bipartisan way was very positive.

[We] successfully worked with other federal agencies, Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Geological Survey, the Forest Service, and BLM in areas of mutual concern, or with the Department of Transportation, as we mentioned earlier. We worked with Labor in terms of improving the safety of our employees. We had a totally unacceptable rate of injuries among our employees and I set that as a high priority to substantially reduce, although I wanted to get was to zero, but that was almost impossible with the number of employees who are injured on the job. So we worked then on a program with the Department of Labor and drew

on their expertise, and it did result in reducing the number of lost time injuries among our employees. I felt very proud about that.

Another was obviously the Public Lands Conservation Corp that we instituted through the use of recreational fee money and great partnerships with a number of outstanding organizations. For every dollar that we put in the private sector, others put in another dollar to provide viable youth employment programs. So just a number of the areas of which I'm very proud. The International Affairs Program, I think, enhanced the respect of the Park Service and the park people by collaboration, cooperation across international boundaries. As I said it had a direct benefit to our nation's diplomatic objectives in terms of creating goodwill.

Were there some things that you weren't able to accomplish?

Yes. I was in office for three and a half years. I would have hoped [for] twice as much time. Probably would be ten or twenty things that I did not accomplish that I would have wanted to. I would have wanted to continue to increase or improve upon the diversity within the National Park Service employee ranks. We made some strides, but not to my satisfaction. There are some reorganization or organization goals that I think I would have preferred to accomplish, including increased funding for operations, resource protection, and youth programs, permanent fee legislation, and visitor transportation at Grand Canyon and Yosemite.

I was a member of the team that evaluated how we could carry out our central office function with a reduction in FTEs (the reduction that was approved in the earlier years of the Clinton-Gore Administration). I would reexamine whether or not over the long haul it would serve the Park Service well and serve the American people well for us to have retained seven regional offices as opposed to maybe going back to ten. I think ten regional offices perhaps would have been the best way to go. I haven't done any analysis on that. But there have been some reorganization things I would have wanted to put in place. I would have wanted to devote more of the Park Service budget to the Park Service's training program particularly in the business skills, safety, and personnel management, employee housing, cultural resources, and maintenance of park facilities and lands.

Thank you.

I, too, want to thank you Dr. McDonnell for this grand opportunity, and I hope that the sharing of my experiences might be of some value to those who love our national parks and other heritage resources. Truly it was my great joy and privilege to serve the American people as an employee of the National Park Service. I would hope that, in all humility, my career might be reflective of the sentiments expressed in the words of our young president who was in office when I first worked with the National Park Service in 1962:

> *I am certain that when the dust of centuries has passed over our cities, we, too, will be remembered not for our victories or defeats in battle or politics, but for our contribution to the human spirit.*
>
> — John F. Kennedy

ENDNOTES

[1]Mosier Valley, one of the first communities founded by African Americans in Texas, is located 15 miles east of Fort Worth and north of the Trinity River.

[2]Reference to the 1954 landmark Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* that concluded "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal," effectively ending legal racial segregation in public schools in the United States. This overturned the Supreme Court's decision in *Plessy v. Furguson* (1896) that segregation was legal as long as the facilities and accommodations were of equal quality.

[3]The article "Dr. G. Flemmings Leads March to Enter Negro Students in White School," *Fort Worth Star Telegram*, September 8, 1950, provides a compelling account of the unsuccessful attempt to integrate the Euless Independent School described by Mr. Stanton.

[4]Russell E. Dickenson served as director of the National Park Service from 1980-1985.

[5]The Job Corps program was instituted in 1964 to provide education and training opportunities to youths.

[6]George B. Hartzog, Jr., served as director of the National Park Service from 1964-1972.

[7]Dr. John Hope Franklin is a distinguished historian and educator who authored many publications on the Civil War, Reconstruction, and race. He served as chairman of the advisory board for "One America: the President's Initiative on Race."

[8]*Discovery 2000* was a major National Park Service conference held in St. Louis, Missouri, in September, 2000.

[9]George Washington Carver National Monument in Missouri was actually established July 14, 1943.

[10]Reference to the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.

[11]Conrad Wirth served as director of the National Park Service from 1951-1964.

[12]Ronald H. Walker served as director of the National Park Service from 1973-1975.

[13]Gary Everhardt served as director of the National Park Service from 1975-1977.

[14]Reference to Phillip O. Stewart, assistant director, Special Services, and Raymond L. Freeman, assistant director, Development.

[15]William J. Whalen served as director of the National Park Service from 1977-1980.

[16]Reference to *Prophet of the Parks: The Story of William Penn Mott, Jr.* by Mary Ellen Butler.

[17]Herbert J. Cables served as regional director from 1982-1989.

[18]James M. Ridenour served as director of the National Park Service from 1989-1993.

[19]Roger G. Kennedy served as director of the National Park Service from 1993-1997.

[20]The Student Conservation Association promotes natural resource conservation, provides service opportunities, outdoor skills, and leadership training to young men and women.

[21]The NPS 75th Anniversary Symposium "Our National Parks: Challenges and Strategies for the 21st Century" was held in Vail, Colorado, in October 1991. The conference produced "National Parks for the 21st Century, The Vail Agenda: Report and Recommendations to the Director of the National Park Service."

[22]Reference to the 1916 legislation creating the National Park Service.

[23]In 1995, the National Park Service underwent a major administrative reorganization.

[24]Reference to Vice President Al Gore's program for Reinventing Government.

[25]Reference to an approach in which the same percentage of positions are cut throughout an organization.

[26]Reference to the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996, Public Law 104-333, §814 (e), November 12, 1996.

[27]Representative Regula chaired the Interior subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations from 1995-2001.

[28]See footnote 26.

[29]"Rethinking the National Parks for the 21st Century: A Report of the National Park System Advisory Board, July 2001," emphasized the role of the National Park Service in society and its potential contribution to education. It forcefully articulated and reaffirmed the value of parks, conservation, and recreation.

[30]Fran Mainella became director of the National Park Service in 2001.

[31]The NPS National Leadership Council consists of the director, deputy directors, associate directors, regional directors, as well as the chief of the U.S. Park Police and the comptroller.

[32]On October 1, 1993, Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt established the National Biological Survey (NBS), later renamed "Service," including scientists and support staff drawn primarily from the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Land Management. He withdrew from the NPS virtually all of its biological research capability. In the mid-1990s the National Biological Service, weakened by funding and staffing cutbacks, was merged with its geological counterpart, the U.S. Geological Survey.

[33]Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units were authorized in 1999 under Public Law 105-391 and are implemented through formal memorandums of understanding among participating federal agencies. The CESUs are cooperative studies units established on university campuses around the country to provide research, technical assistance, and education to federal partners concerning natural and cultural resource management of federal lands and waters.

[34]On the morning of September 23, 1957, nine African American high school students faced an angry mob of over a thousand protesting the integration of Little Rock High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. Little Rock police escorted the students inside, but the violence was so great that they were removed. The next day, President Dwight D. Eisenhower ordered 1,200 soldiers from the Army's 101st Airborne Division from Fort Campbell to escort the students to school.

[35]Reference to Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site authorized in 1998 to preserve Moton Field where African American pilots, known as Tuskegee Airmen, received training.

[36]In August 1998, Civil War battlefield managers met in Nashville, Tennessee, to discuss the principles and strategies for managing and interpreting Civil War battlefield landscapes and produced a report called "Holding the High Ground." In the 2000 Department of the Interior appropriation bill, Congress directed the National Park Service to compile a report on the status of its interpretation of its battlefield sites and directed the secretary to encourage Civil War sites to address the role of slavery. The NPS held the "Rally on the High Ground" symposium at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C., in May 2000.

[37]In his second inaugural address Abraham Lincoln said: "We all knew that this interest was somehow the cause of the war."

[38]Freeman Tilden, born in 1883, was a novelist and playwright who wrote extensively about the national parks.

[39]The Save America's Treasures program, initiated by the White House in 1998 and managed by the National Park Service, provides grants to preserve the important symbols of America's past to include historic sites, monuments, and documents.

[40]Reference to Glacier National Park, which was designated as Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park World Heritage Site in 1995.

[41]Reference to Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve.

[42]Reference to Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas.

[43]On "Bloody Sunday," March 7, 1965, approximately 600 civil rights marchers headed east out of Selma on U.S. Route 80 headed toward the Alabama state capitol in Montgomery. They got as far as the Edmund Pettus Bridge, six blocks away where state and local lawmen attacked them and drove them back to Selma. On Sunday March 21, roughly 3,200 set out again. By the time they reached the capital on March 25, they were 25,000 strong.

[44]Reference to Minidoka Internment National Monument in Idaho.

[45]Reference to the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Act of 1998.

[46]The special resource study for the Carter G. Woodson Home was conducted during Mr. Stanton's term as director. The study concluded that the house was nationally significant and recommended that it become a unit of the National Park System as a national historic site. Congress also authorized the special resource study for Harriet Tubman during his tenure.

[47]Public Law 105-391, 105th Cong. (November 13, 1998). "An Act To Provide for Improved Management and Increased Accountability for Certain NPS Programs and for Other Purposes."16 USC,§§ 1-5, Title III, *National Park Service New Area Studies Act*, § 303.

[48]The Antiquities Act of 1906 authorized the president to set aside public land as national monuments.

[49]Mr. Stanton and Dr. Winks taught a course titled "The National Parks: Lessons in Diversity, Environmental Quality and Justice" at Yale University in the fall term of 2002.